

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Govt urged to implement UN Convention on their rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Alliance of Disabled People's Organisations (NADPO) yesterday urged the government to implement fully the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities to ensure their rights as they are the most deprived people in the society.

At a press conference at the National Press Club in the city, the alliance leaders said the successive governments merely gave assurances rather than implementing the convention to ensure the rights of the people with disabilities.

"We are the citizens of the country. We cast our votes to elect the government. We have

the rights to enjoy all facilities like other people in the country. But why we the people with disabilities are linked only to social welfare ministry when there are separate ministries for others to address their different issues like education, health, employment and others," asked MA Sattar Dulal, president of NADPO, while addressing the conference.

"There is no facilities for people with disabilities to enter the markets, offices or other organisations," he said, adding, "Even the hospitals, courts, schools, colleges, press club, secretariat and the prime minister's office are constructed in such a way that we

can hardly enter there."

NADPO Secretary General Jahangir Alam in his keynote paper pointed out that around 10 percent of country's total population are either physically or mentally challenged but no government took any effective steps to mainstream them.

"It is not possible for the country to move forward keeping aside such a huge number of people," he said, adding, the people with disabilities want to contribute to country's economic development instead of being a burden.

Shaukat Hossain Bhuiyan, senior vice chairman of NADPO, said the state is responsible for ensuring primary education for all, but

in the cases of people with disabilities there is no such facilities to ensure their education.

Another vice chairman of NADPO Saiful Islam said it is the duty of those who are running the country to ensure people's rights without any discrimination but it is a matter of regret that they are not sincere enough to implement the rights of the people with disabilities.

The NADPO leaders also demanded 15 reserved seats in parliament and the allocation of at least one percent of national budget for the people with disabilities to involve them in the country's development activities.



Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (Jasas) forms a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday protesting destruction of murals of late president Ziaur Rahman at various places.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS' LIST

Steps taken to prevent inclusion of fake names

RASHIDUL HASAN

The parliamentary body on liberation war affairs ministry yesterday asked a sub-committee to define freedom fighters and liberation war to prevent inclusion of fake names in the list of freedom fighters.

"As far as I know, we don't have any definition of freedom fighters and liberation war acceptable to all. The parliamentary body formed a sub-committee to prepare a draft defining freedom fighters and the liberation war," committee Chairman Maj Gen (retd) Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star after a meeting

at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. He said they had taken the initiative to identify the freedom fighters.

The sub-committee headed by Shamsur Rahman Sharif has been asked to exchange views with various sections of people and organisations to prepare the draft, said Awami League lawmaker Rafiqul Islam.

"It will be placed before the House for approval after we consult the matter with the prime minister," he said.

The former home minister said many fake names had been included in the list of freedom fighters in absence of

a comprehensive definition of freedom fighters.

The parliamentary body would ask the authorities concerned to take stern actions against those who have illegally occupied lands and properties in the name of liberation war organisations, said Rafiqul Islam, also a sector commander in the liberation war, at a press briefing at the Jatiya Sangsad media centre.

The committee also asked liberation war affairs ministry to take actions against the developer company of Gulistan Complex in the city for embezzlement.

CPA assures Hamid of support for strong democracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Secretary General William J Shija yesterday gave assurance to provide all kinds of assistance to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Bangladesh.

The CPA secretary general gave this assurance while holding a meeting with Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Abdul Hamid Advocate in London, according to a release received here.

Praising parliamentary activities in Bangladesh, Shija said CPA would continue to provide assistance to strengthen parliamentary activities in the South Asian country.

Speaker Hamid thanked the CPA secretary general for his assurance of providing necessary assistance.

Earlier, Hamid called on Alan Heselhurst, deputy speaker of British House of Commons, at the latter's office.

They exchanged issues of mutual interests and parliamentary activities of the two countries.

Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lablu Mia, a fourth year student of philosophy department at Jagannath University, has long been suffering from cancer, says a press release.

Lablu, who hails from Hatibandha in Lalmonirhat, is now undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

According to doctors, he needs better treatment, which involves about Tk 10 lakh. But it is not possible for his poor family to arrange such a huge amount of money.

So, he has made a fervent appeal to generous people to extend a helping hand to save his life.

Contributions can be sent to Lablu Mia, Account No. 34029154, Agrani Bank, Jagannath University Branch, Dhaka.

Interested persons can also call at 01722-366411 or 01717-362909 to contact him.

Prof Pran Gopal elected university assoc president

METRO DESK

Prof Pran Gopal Datta, vice-chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, has been elected president of Association of Universities of Bangladesh, says a press release.

He was elected president of the association unanimously at the 220th meeting of the standing committee of the body held at the conference room of Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Building of Dhaka University on Tuesday.

As the president of the association Prof Gopal will also discharge duties as councillor of Association of Commonwealth Universities.

UK willing to help Bangladesh in war crimes trial

JASIM UDDIN KHAN, from London

The British government is willing to share its old records and provide legal assistance to Bangladesh for the trial of war criminals for the sake of its fairness and neutrality, according to sources in the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The UK government has put utmost emphasis on holding the trial in a fair and neutral manner, they said.

"We fully understand the desire of the government and many Bangladeshis to hold to account those who may have been guilty of war crimes during the war of independence," Towheed Feroze, senior press officer, British High

Commission in Dhaka, wrote in a mail in response to a query from The Daily Star to the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London.

Quoting from senior press officials Jon Ryan and Robert Morini of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Feroze wrote that it is most important to the UK government that the war crimes trial are seen to be fair and neutral.

"The British government understands that this is an emotive and sensitive issue and that there is a demand among a large number of people to see war crime related trials become reality," The press official added.

On May 31, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni met British Minister

of International Defence and Security Ann Taylor Bolton during a security summit in Singapore and sought relevant old records available in the UK.

The British government had also suggested the Bangladesh government take UN assistance in investigating and prosecuting crimes against humanity and other serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed in 1971 to avert any criticism.

During the tenure of the immediate past caretaker government, the UN also agreed to provide assistance to Bangladesh in this regard.

Some available documents Communications between the US embassy officials and USIS centres in Dhaka and

India, and the officials in Washington DC in 1971 shows that US officials working in diplomatic institutions within Bangladesh used the term 'selective genocide' to describe events at that time. The documents are now available at the Department of State website. The chronology of the communications is now available at the site: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/>.

Time Magazine in a special report on Bangladesh War of Independence published on August 02, 1971 (available in the online archive) said the genocide carried out by the Pakistani army and its collaborators is the most incredible calculated thing since the days of the Nazis in Poland.

Light tremor jolts port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A light earthquake jolted the port city yesterday morning.

The quake measuring 4.7 on the Richter scale shook the city at 9:58.51am (DST) and lasted for few seconds.

The epicentre of the tremor was 312 kilometres south-east off seismic centre at Agargaon in the capital and near Myanmar region, sources said.

However, no casualty was reported till filing of this report at 2:45pm.

Three killed in road accidents

METRO DESK

Three people were killed in separate road accidents in Dinajpur, Narail and Jhenidah yesterday.

Our correspondent in Dinajpur adds: One person was killed in a road accident at Biral upazila in Dinajpur yesterday.

The victim was identified as Md Abdul Aziz, 33, an employee of a non-government organisation Padakhep.

Police said the accident occurred his motorbike collided head-on with a tractor, leaving him dead on the spot and another injured.

A correspondent in Narail adds: An unidentified Youth was killed in a road accident on Narail-Lohagara road near Dattapara Bazar under Narail sadar upazila yesterday.

Police and locals said the accident occurred at about 4:00pm when a Narail-bound truck hit him from behind, leaving him dead on the spot.

Our correspondent in Jhenidah adds: One person was killed in a road accident at Tatipur Bazar under Kaliganj upazila in Jhenidah yesterday.

The victim was identified as Abdul Goni, 35, of Digherpara village under Kaliganj upazila.

Police said the accident occurred when a Nosimom turned turtle, leaving Goni dead on the spot and five others injured.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Prof ANM Abdul Mannan Khan, former teacher of Arabic department of Dhaka University, will be held at his residence on the campus after Asr prayers tomorrow, says a press release.

Relatives, colleagues, students and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

Malaysia to lift ban on workers soon

Hopes president

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday expressed his hope that the Malaysian government would lift the temporary ban on the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers soon in line with their assurances as manpower export to the Asean country again reportedly stalled.

"Appreciate the Malaysian government for hosting some four lakh Bangladeshis employed in different professions who are contributing to both Bangladesh and Malaysian economic development," he said when newly appointed Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Jamaluddin Bin Sabeh presented his credentials to him at Bangabhaban.

Zillur urged Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest here in a bigger way as "presently a congenial investment climate is prevailing in the country with availability of low-cost workforce".

The president also urged Malaysian businesspeople to import Bangladeshi world-

standard pharmaceuticals, jute products and ceramics considering their high quality.

He said Bangladesh and Malaysia can work together and play active role in Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC), Non-Aligned Movement (Nam) and the United Nations (UN) and other international forums.

"The two countries also can work in close cooperation to address the climate change issue," he told the envoy.

The new envoy expressed his satisfaction over the existing bilateral relations between the two countries and hoped the relations would further strengthen in the days to come.

He sought all-out cooperation of the president in discharging his duties during his tenure.

Secretary of the President's Office Mohammad Shafiul Alam, Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen Md Ehtesham Ul Haque, Foreign Secretary M Mijarul Quayes and President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present during the meeting.

MEGA PLAN FOR POWER

Govt to seek dev partners' cooperation: Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said the government would seek cooperation from development partners to implement its mega plan for power and energy.

The next meeting of Bangladesh Development Forum would be held in January next, he said, adding that the plan would be placed in the meeting.

Talking to journalists at his secretariat office, the minister said a mega plan on digital Bangladesh and water resources would also be placed in the donors' meeting.

The draft of the plan for power and gas has already been prepared, it would be placed in the cabinet soon for final approval and later it would be published, he added.

"Power is dragging down our development efforts,"

the minister noted.

He said, "An inefficient government (meaning the four-party alliance government) had destroyed the power sector. There had not been any power generation; no transmission lines were set up. In the last seven years, nothing was done in the power sector. After we came to power, the production of electricity increased to some extent, but its benefit is not available as there is no transmission line."

Muhith said, "After preparing our mega plan for power, we would be in a position to say how long time it would take to get rid of the existing severe power crisis."

The minister said this while replying to journalists' queries after a meeting with a delegation of the European Bangladesh Federation of Commerce and Industries and Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association.

Schoolgirl commits suicide in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolgirl committed suicide by jumping from the rooftop of a six-storey building in the city yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Mehna Hossain Mim, 15, daughter of Akhter Hossain, was a student of class eight of Mastermind School at Uttara.

On information police reached the spot at around 2:00am, recovered the body lying on the ground near the building and sent it to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital for autopsy.

Police said she went to the rooftop at about 1:00am following a family feud in the evening and jumped to death.

Her parents reside on the fourth floor of the building, police said adding, details could not be known immediately regarding the cause of her suicide.

Police said an unnatural death case was recorded in this connection with Uttara Police Station yesterday.

Meeting with WB on Padma Bridge today

BSS, Munshiganj

A meeting between World Bank Vice President Isabel Guerrero and Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain will be held in Dhaka today, which among other things will specially focus on bank's finance for the proposed Padma Bridge project.

Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain yesterday said this while talking to journalists here after a visit to one of the five boring sites of the main bridge area at Janjira point for soil test.

Terming the meeting very important, he said the WB like other donors is very keen to finance the mega project and we expect that the size of the actual support of the WB will be more than US\$ 300 million so far committed.

Maunsell AECOM, design consultant of the Padma Bridge, so far drilled at five points on both sides of the bridge, including three on a new char on the Padma at Janjira side. Two other drills were at Mawa and Jinjira.

"Primarily we find excellent soil condition, which consists of stone like rock and compact sand under the river bed," said Rafiqul Islam, chief engineer of the Bridge Authority.

However, Bangladesh

University Engineering and Technology (Buet) will further test the soil, he said, adding that the depth of the piers of the bridge will depend on the strength of the soil to be confirmed after final test.

Secretary of the Bridge Division Zahid Hossain and Project Manager of Munsell AECOM, Ken Wheeler and senior officials of the ministry were present.

Syed Abul Hossain, who is steering the whole process of the most priority project of the present government, said local and foreign experts will visit the boring sites next week and final scheme design would be submitted by this month.

"Seeing the soil condition, we are hopeful that the Tk 10,000 crore bridge could be constructed much ahead of the schedule in December 2013" he said.

He said the government has already disbursed the whole amount for land acquisition and taken all out measures for rehabilitation of the families to be evicted from the project sites.

Project Manager of Munsell, Ken Wheeler said the Padma Bridge will have one of the deepest piers of the world considering its scouring pad and earthquake vulnerability.

EC to talk with parties on RPO changes

FROM PAGE 16 including the ninth parliamentary polls in December last year.

"We may sit again with the country's political parties to remove the inconsistencies," Huda said.

"The Election Commission (EC) has brought epoch-making changes in the election process in Bangladesh through the RPO," he told reporters after paying a call on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban yesterday.

He was accompanied by the two other commissioners - M Sohul Hussain and Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain during the meeting.

Huda said they apprised the president of the regular activities of the election commission, including the ongoing task of updating the voter list.

"As per the rules, he (president) is our employer and we need to apprise him of our advancement of activities."

The commission has decided to set up server stations in every upazila as well as sub-office at divisional and district levels with a view to

institutionalising the updating process of the voter list.

"The task of voter list updating should be decentralised," he said.

Describing voter-list updating as an ongoing process, the CEC mentioned that people whose age was 18 on the 1st of January would be included in the voter list.

"The EC expects that about two and a half million voters would be increased after updating the voter list."

This year the updating is going on without army help, he added.

About the permanent constitutions of the political parties, Huda said seven registered political parties failed to submit their constitutions and the commission has already extended the timeframe for six months on request placed through the parties' applications.

"If the parties again fail to submit the permanent constitutions within the fresh deadline, their registration will be cancelled," he said.

When asked about LGRD minister's view of holding the

general election every three years, the CEC made his personal remark that it would not be rational to hold the polls after three years in a poor country like Bangladesh because some Tk 250-300 crore is needed to hold the polls involving some 10 lakh people.

He, however, said if the government takes decision and seeks suggestion from the commission, then the EC would give its opinion.

"It is the political matter and decision of the government," Huda said.

During the meeting, the president gave them a patient hearing and assured them his all-out cooperation in discharging their duties.

The president highly appreciated the role of the election commission for holding a free, fair and transparent election by using digital voter list.

President's Office Secretary Mohammad Shafiul Alam, Military Secretary Maj Gen Md Ehtesham Ul Haque and Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present at the meeting.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Delwara Begum, mother of Kazi Nazrul Islam, general secretary of Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh and secretary general of Saarc Engineers Forum, passed away due to old-age complications at her village home in Magura yesterday at the age of 88, says a press release.

She left behind her four sons, five daughters and a host of relatives to mourn her death. Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh expressed shock at her death.

Prof Dipok Kamal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Prof Dipok Kamal, a teacher of Department of Fisheries and Marine Resource Technology of Khulna University, passed away at a hospital in Bangkok on Tuesday at the age of 45, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one child and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He will be buried at his village home in Pabna after his second namaz-e-janaza on Khulna University campus tomorrow.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the fifth death anniversary of eminent journalist and writer Santosh Gupta, says a press release.

He died on this day in 2004 due to brain hemorrhage at the age of 80.

He was the senior assistant editor of the Daily Sangbad.

Santosh Gupta Smriti Parishad will place wreaths at his memorial at the Postagala crematorium at 9:00am, marking the day.

A memorial meeting will be held at the National Press Club on August 8 at 6:00pm. A post card titled 'Santosh Gupta: A Legendary Journalist' will be launched on the occasion with 12 portraits of Santosh Gupta by famous 12 artists.

Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Academician Dr Anisuzzaman, Artist Qaiyum Chowdhury, Hashem Khan, Golam Sarwar and Abed Khan will take part in the discussion with Santosh Gupta Smriti Parishad convenor Monayem Sarker in the chair.