

Call to enact law to stop fatwa

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday demanded enactment of separate law to stop fatwa, a form of religious edict which is spreading alarmingly in rural areas of the country.

However, there were some speakers at the workshop who opined that proper implementation of the existing laws can prevent fatwa.

The workshop titled 'Dorra (whipping) and existing laws: Bangladeshi perspective' was organised by Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) at

LGED conference room in the city.

Speaking as chief guest Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury said there are some laws which can help stop whipping, but it depends on their proper implementation.

He said human rights activists, who are working on violence against women, can formulate a draft on fatwa-related law and submit it to the prime minister, law and justice affairs minister and law commission for their consideration to enact a separate law to stop fatwa.

Police officials, who were present at the workshop, said they cannot stop the

incidents of whipping due to shortage of manpower and poor transportation system.

"Most of the whipping incidents take place at remote areas where the victims are already punished before the arrival of police, they added.

Media men at the workshop said NGOs can play a vital role in stopping fatwa in remote areas.

BSEHR executive committee member Abdul Matin chaired the workshop where Afsana Chowdhury of the organisation read out a keynote paper on the theme of the workshop.

'Asthma Centre' project cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The 'Asthma Centre' project worth Tk 11 crore at Nishindara in the city has been cancelled over complicity centring the handing over of the place.

Source said the public works department in Bogra repeatedly issued letters to the health ministry for handing over the space, but the health ministry did not take any steps to this end.

Meanwhile, the public work department has sent a proposal to the health ministry demanding additional allocation of Tk 1.17 crores for another project of a 100-bed diabetic hospital.

Department sources said the initial construction cost of the diabetic hospital was estimated as Tk 4.96 crore while the construction work was supposed to be completed by 2008. However, the construction work of the project is yet to begin.

"Under the circumstances, a new proposal has been sent to the health ministry cancelling the previous one while the construction cost of the new project has been estimated at Tk 6.66 crore," said officials of the public works department.

HC asks govt to reinstate 116 BSCIC project staffs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court on Thursday declared illegal a government order terminating 116 officials and staffs of the Women Entrepreneurs' Development Project under the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

The court also directed the government to absorb the officials and staffs into the revenue sector and give them all admissible facilities.

An HC bench of Justice Md Miftah Uddin Chowdhury and Justice Abu Bakar Siddiquee passed the orders in two separate verdicts upon two writ petitions.

The employees filed the writ petitions in February challenging the legality of the termination order issued on October 7, 2007 with retrospective effect on July 1, 2004.

Advocate Salahuddin Dolon appeared for the petitioners.

Women Entrepreneurs Trade Expo begins Monday

UNB, Dhaka

The 6th "Dosti-Women Entrepreneurs Trade Expo-2009" (Wetex) will begin on Monday at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city to promote and assist the women entrepreneurs.

Pakistan High Commission will organise the six-day exhibition, a high commission release said.

Around 100 women entrepreneurs from around the region mainly from Bangladesh are expected to participate in the exposition.

Dosti-Wetex has become one of the strongest brands in Bangladesh to support the capable and emerging women entrepreneurs by providing them opportunity to learn from hands-on experience as well as that of the other women entrepreneurs of the region.

The initiative is aimed at promoting and assisting women entrepreneurs in the region, building contacts with the business community, and developing market strategies appropriate to their products.

5TH ANNIVERSARY OF GRENADE ATTACK ON AL RALLY

'Punish attackers, stamp out terrorism'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) and its associate organisations observed the fifth anniversary of heinous grenade attack on an AL rally at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday, calling for exemplary punishment to the attackers and pledges to root out terrorism.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid a wreath at the temporary monument in memory of the deceased in front of the party's central office in the city. Security forces took special measures in and around the Bangabandhu Avenue from Thursday night.

The lethal attack on the rally on August 21 in 2004 left at least 24 people killed and over 100 injured which still haunts the nation. Those killed include former Dhaka mayor Mohammad Hanif and AL's then women affairs secretary Ivy Rahman.

It is believed that the attack was an attempt to kill the AL chief Hasina during the four-party alliance government. She survived the attack but had her ears damaged from the blasts.

To mark the day, various organisations and the relatives of the deceased staged protest rallies in the city and elsewhere in the country.

Speakers at a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue said the influential figures of the BNP-Jamaat acted behind those accused in the grenade attack and they actually played the role in diverting the investigation of the then detective officials.

A special team should be formed to investigate into the cases and punish the criminals, they said.

Bangladesh Muktijoddha Sangsads brought out a mourning procession from Eskaton to Bangabandhu Avenue, laid wreaths at the temporary monument in memory of the deceased and arranged special prayers for peace of the departed souls of

the martyrs.

Amra Muktijoddha Santan, a platform of the children of freedom fighters, brought out a procession, demanding immediate arrest of BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury for his indecent behaviour.

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote led by Tarana Halim MP and Arun Sarker Rana placed wreaths at the monument. It also organised a discussion at Dhaka Reporters' Unity. They observed a minute's silence in respect of the deceased.

Speaking as the chief guest, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Capt (retd) AB Tazul Islam said the August 21 attack

was clearly made on the life of Hasina. The anti-liberation forces, who were defeated in '71, made the attack.

"There was an instigation of BNP behind the attack. This syndicate of BNP-Jamaat-Shibir must be tried in the soil of Bangladesh," he said.

Tarana Halim, MP said it has to be investigated if BNP chief Khaleda Zia had any hand in the grenade attack. "If not that, why she did not identify the attackers and try them?" Tarana posed a question.

The goal of the August 21 attack was to destroy the progress of independence, democracy, peace and development, she said, adding that the then

alliance government tried to save the attackers and let them flee.

AL Companiganj upazila organised a protest rally at Basurhat Rupali Circle where its leaders demanded hanging of the attackers of August 21 and SQ Chowdhury.

Rajbari district AL at its office organised a discussion and milad mahfil on the occasion.

Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Misbahur Rahman in a statement said conspirators gathered strength to kill Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman and attack his daughter Hasina, as the war criminals were not tried.



PHOTO: STAR
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other Awami League leaders stand in solemn silence after placing wreaths at a memorial to the victims of August 21 grenade attack in front of the party office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: GRAMEEN BANK
Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and Dr Said Irandoust, president of Asian Institute of Technology, sign an agreement at the launch of Yunus Centre at the institute in Bangkok on Wednesday. The institute launched the Yunus Centre to promote research and social business with special focus on agriculture.

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