

Electronic ID cards for sectt staff, visitors SOON

BSS, Dhaka

The government has decided to intensify the security of Bangladesh Secretariat, the hub of the country's administration, by introducing electronic identity cards (EICs) for employees and visitors.

Officials familiar with the initiative told BSS that work is underway to introduce the EICs for officials and other staff members of the complex, and electronic visitor cards (EVCs) for others.

"We will float a tender for the project as the preparatory work is nearing completion," an official said adding that the major objective of the task will be to check unauthorised entry into the Secretariat for ensuring security in the country's administrative heart.

He said the employees and the visitors would enter the offices by punching their respective cards to a readable machine while the number plates of listed vehicles of ministers and officials, which enter secretariat regularly, would be recorded in another device to be installed at the secretariat gates.

The device will allow the recorded vehicles to enter the secretariat directly, but it would give warning alarm while any visitor's car passes through the gate," the official said.

The official said the plan was taken against the backdrop of growing security concern for the secretariat complex as it becomes unmanageable to scrutinise the entry of the growing number of visitors through the conventional way of the entry system.

"The introduction of the EIC and the EVC is expected to improve the security vigilance on the secretariat premises and keep the records of incoming and outgoing employees more transparently," another official said.

He said the new system would also discourage manipulation at the gate by the unwanted visitors to the secretariat.

The source also said the ministry has a plan to set up card readable machine in front of each ministry so that visitors would not enter any ministry with the pass of the other ministries.

Support Centre: A ray of hope for women victims of violence



(Left) Child victims of violence at the Victim Support Centre. (Right) The support centre on the premises of Tejgaon Police Station in the city.

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Failing to endure torture by her employer, 12-year-old Hashi fled the house where she worked as a domestic help but lost her way while trying to return to his village home at Sirajganj from the capital on September 19.

Scared, she asked people how to reach Sirajganj. Finally, she landed in the Victim Support Centre at Tejgaon Police Station in the city after a man informed the police of the girl's conditions.

She is now happy because she believes that the police are trying to find out her parents and will soon take her back to them.

"They even gave me a new dress and special food on Eid day," said Hashi, as she was playing with two other children at the Victim Support Centre.

Since its inception on February 17, the centre has supported at least 300 helpless women and children through providing shelter, legal aid and counselling.

"Whenever we receive any information about a victim of torture, rape, domestic violence and trafficking or missing persons from the police stations or NGOs or any individuals, we go to the spot and bring the victims to this centre," said Assistant Police Commissioner Shamima Parveen.

The centre has the capacity to accommodate eight victims at a time and that mostly the victims of domestic violence come here for advice, she said.

"Most of the victims who come here are traumatised and they are from lower economic group," Shamima said.

The victims can stay a maximum of five days at the centre. During this period, the police try to find out the addresses of their village home, collect information from the local police station and then send them back.

"If we fail to find out their home villages and a safe place for them, we send them to our partner organisations' shelter homes where

they can receive education and different types of training," Shamima said.

"We even talk to the chairman and members of the Union Parishads, if necessary, to raise social awareness about trafficking and other issues," she said, adding that some 22 policewomen are working at the support centre.

The Victim Support Centre was established under the Police Reform Project to provide round-the-clock service through especially trained police. Anybody can also inform the centre of any forms of violence against women and children in person or over telephone.

Its partner organisations include Ain O Shalish Kendra, Association of Correction and Social Reclamation, Aparajeyo Bangladesh, Acid Survivors Foundation, Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Marie Stopes Clinic.

"It is such a place where the helpless people, especially women, can have easy access to and seek help. After anybody come to us, it becomes our duty to protect her and ensure her safety," said Shabnam, an on-duty officer.

Citing an example, she said a woman went to the Kafrul Police Station at night the other day and sought help as her husband drove her out of the house but kept their 15-day-old child with him.

"When the Kafrul police informed us, we brought the woman to the support centre and also managed to know about her husband's whereabouts and returned the child to the woman who worked at a garment factory," she said.

The main feature of this support centre is that the police, doctors, lawyers, counsellors and social workers all work together to protect the victims and ensure their rights, Advocate Sultana Kamal of Ain O Shalish Kendra said and stressed the need to establish more such centres across the country.

2 community cops sustain stab injuries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two members of community police sustained stab injuries as they foiled an attempt to commit robbery at a house on Mazar Road in the city's Uttarkhan yesterday.

Injured Elias Fakir, 35, and Badsha Miah, 40, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) with injuries in their necks and hands.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Nazmul Islam of Uttarkhan Police Station said they were attacked by a gang of robbers when they resisted them from entering a house in the area at around 2:30am.

Talking to this correspondent at DMCH Elias said, "Hearing a scream I along with Badsha rushed to the house where the robbers numbering around four were trying to break open the gate. We chased the robbers to catch them but they attacked us with knives and managed to flee the scene."

'Educate yourself for betterment of community'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Harun-or-Rashid, provic chancellor of Dhaka University (DU), has urged the younger generation of the Dalits, also known as Harijans, to educate themselves for the betterment of their community.

"The Dalit is the most underprivileged community in the country. You have to take the lead to bring changes in the lifestyle of the people of your community and the main weapon of changing the living standard is education," he said.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a cloth distribution ceremony among the children of the Dalit community of City Colony at Aga Sadek Lane in Old Dhaka yesterday on the occasion of Durga Puja, the largest religious festival of the Hindus.

He also assured the Dalits of giving them priority while recruiting people for different jobs in DU as per their quality.

He urged the government to take necessary initiatives to ensure equal rights for the Dalits in all the sectors.

Nirmal Chatterjee, joint secretary of Mahanagar Sarbojaneen Puja Committee; Rina Roy, director of Manusher Jonno Foundation; Ranjan Karmakar, executive director of Step Towards Development, were also present on the occasion.

New clothes were distributed among over 300 poor children at the programme.

AL wants to scrap CG system to prolong power

Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said the ruling Awami League (AL) wants to scrap the caretaker government system amending the constitution to assume power again through stage-managed election.

"They (AL) want to hold election staying in power but the people will not accept it," he said while talking to reporters at his Armanitola residence in the old part of the capital.

Delwar said besides the opinion of the majority in the house, the opinion of public should also be sought for amending the constitution.

He also found no rationale

for seeking the suggestion of the Law Commission on the amendment of the constitution and said the ministry concerned can take initiative in this regard and it could be discussed in the house.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed on Thursday said the government has initiated a move to 'update the constitution' by bringing the 15th amendment to changes in various provisions including the one related to the caretaker government, tenure of parliament and the local government system.

Delwar said any amend-

ment to the constitution has to be done on the basis of all-party consensus after discussion in the house.

"Any change in the constitution could not be done on a unilateral decision," he added.

Delwar, however, welcomed the view of LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam who said the amendments would be done through discussion with all parties.

The BNP leader also reiterated his stance regarding joining in parliament saying that his party will attend the house if the congenial atmosphere is created.



A devotee offers prayers at Dhakeshwari Temple Puja Mandap in the city yesterday, the second day of five-day Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of Hindu.

Condition of Tofail improves

BSS, Dhaka

The condition of Awami League Advisory Council Member Tofail Ahmed, who has suffered injuries after falling from a ferry and is now undergoing treatment at the city's Square Hospital, is gradually improving.

Tofail Ahmed will be released within one or two days as his condition is improving, Brig Gen (ret'd) John Gomes, general manager of the hospital, told BSS yesterday.

Sometimes such kind of injuries need operation, but Tofail Ahmed does not require that, Gomes said adding that he already advised the patient to take two or three weeks bed rest for complete recovery.

Tofail Ahmed, also a former minister, suffered the injuries as he fell from the ferry while returning to Dhaka from his Bhola constituency on September 23.

Deputy leader of the House and acting president of Bangladesh Awami League Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury earlier visited the ailing leader.

Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haque and State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak were also among the visitors.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE Consultation begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A daylong consultation begins in the city today to make recommendations addressing the needs of Bangladesh to face the challenges of global climate change.

About 100 representatives from different districts are expected to attend the consul-

tation and make the recommendations.

The participants will elaborate discuss climate change and its impact, emission of greenhouse gas, use of befitting technology and coordination of economy to help devise a long-term plan to face the situation.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin

Siddique will attend the consultation as special guest while lawmaker Sanjida Khanam will inaugurate it.

As part of the campaign titled 'World Wide Views on Global Warming', Incidin Bangladesh, a non-governmental organisation, is holding the consultation at Brac Centre Inn.

At a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday, the organisers said the campaign to protect the interest of affected nations including Bangladesh will be carried out in 67 countries facing the effects of global warming.

AKM Masud Ali, one of the executive directors of Incidin Bangladesh, said the opinion and recommendations collected from the consultation would be handed over to the government delegation that would take part in the 15th United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen, capital of Denmark, in December next to help formulate a global policy.

AKM Mustaque Ali, Kazi Maruful Islam, Nasimul Ahsan, Rakibul Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahman and Tamal Hossain were also present at the press briefing.



AKM Mustaque Ali speaks at a press conference at National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is Kazi Maruful Islam.

CLASH OVER LAND DISPUTE

Injured cop dies in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A police constable succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday after he was injured in a clash between two groups of villagers at Godagari on September 20.

Alam, 35, who was serving the Criminal Investigation Department in Dhaka, came to his home at Godagari during Eid holiday.

He was stabbed during the clash over a land dispute on the day before Eid, said Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal, officer-in-charge of Godagari Police Station.

Alam was immediately rushed to RMCH where he succumbed to his injuries at around 10:00am yesterday.

Police recorded a murder case in this connection and arrested three persons -- Khalilur Rahman, 20, Mizanur Rahman, 50, and Obaidullah, 30.

The arrestees were also injured in the clash and are undergoing treatment at Rajshahi Police Hospital.



Firefighters spray water to extinguish a fire that broke out at a shop at Elephant Road in the city yesterday. The shop was closed due to Eid holiday.