

Int'l Day of Older Persons today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The International Day of Older Persons 2009 will be observed in the country today as elsewhere around the globe with a befitting manner.

The UN General Assembly designated October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons in 1990 to recognise the contributions of older persons and to examine issues that affect their lives.

The theme of this year's commemoration is "Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the International Year of Older Persons: Towards a Society for All Ages".

On the occasion, various socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes in the city.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in a message on the occasion said, "Over the past decades, we intensified our efforts to build a society for all ages and to promote international commitment to the United Nations Principles for older persons."

"We must put an end to age discrimination, abuse, neglect and violence against older persons," Ban Ki-moon said.

Bangladesh Probin Hitoishi Sangho will organise a seminar at the LGED auditorium tomorrow to mark the day.

The Day is a special occasion for older persons or senior citizens across the world.

Low over Bay persists

UNB, Dhaka

The well marked low over west central Bay and adjoining northwest Bay persists over the same area yesterday.

"It is likely to intensify further and move in a north-westerly direction," said a warning message of the Met office.

Under its influence, deep convection is taking place over North Bay, it said.

It also warned that squally weather might affect the maritime ports and coastal regions of Bangladesh.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing boats and trawlers over the North Bay and deep sea have been advised to remain close to the coast and proceed with caution until further notice.

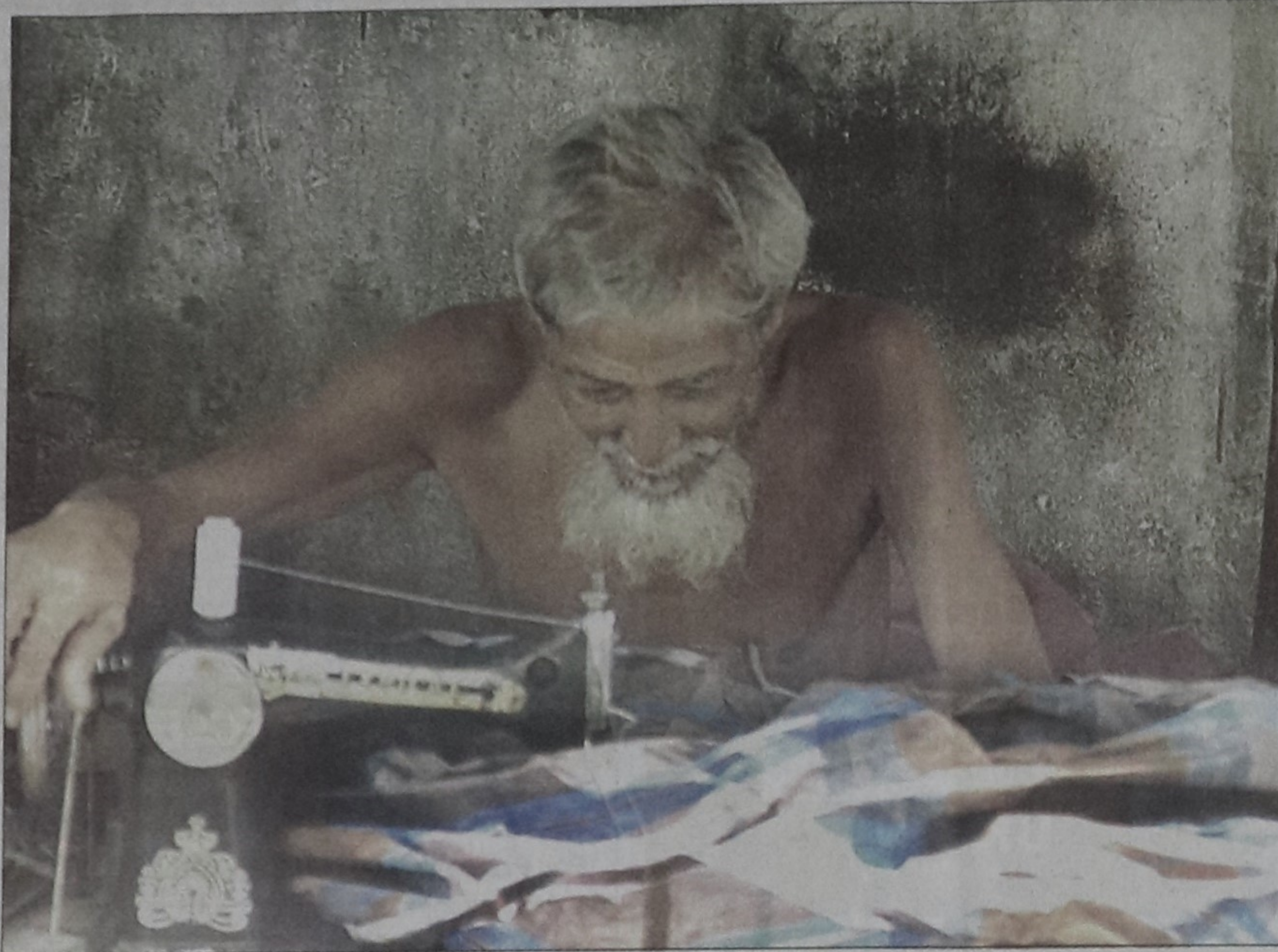


PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

HARD-EARNED LIVING: Abdur Rahman, a septuagenarian of Ananda Bazar near Aga Sadek Road on the old part of the city, earns his living by tailoring lungis now as his family has abandoned him at this critical period of his life. Though the government has introduced old-age allowance, Rahman cannot fulfil the bare necessities of his life even on The International Day of Older Persons today.

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

CID seeks 10-day remand for Pintu

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police yesterday submitted a petition to a Dhaka court seeking a ten-day fresh remand to interrogate former deputy minister and BNP leader Abdus Salam Pintu in connection with the August 21 grenade attack case.

The remand prayer came following a further investigation into the case filed by the prosecution on June 25 this year to trace suppliers of Argus grenade that were used in the attacks on August 21 of 2004.

CID also filed another five-day remand for the member of Harkatul Jihad (Huji) Abu Taher, who was earlier arrested and taken on different terms of remand for interrogation.

The court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, however, fixed today for hearing on the remand prayer in their presence.

In the forwarding report, the newly appointed investigation officer (IO) CID's additional Superintendent of police Abdul Kahar Akond said they need to be remanded to find out clues when and why they held a meeting at Pintu's

government quarter before committing the offences.

On August 3, a Dhaka court ordered further investigation into the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally, stating that the probe conducted earlier could not identify the collectors and suppliers of grenades used in the attack.

The court ordered the inspector general of police to conduct the investigation and submit the report to the court within two months.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped the attack but 23 of her party leaders and workers were killed and over 300 were maimed.

The eight absconding accused are Pintu's brothers Tajuddin and Maulana Liton, Anisul Mursalin and his brother Mahibul Muttakin, Iqbal, Maulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Howlader, Jahangir Alam Badar and Khalilur Rahman.

The CID, which had misdirected the investigation during the rule of BNP-Jamaat-led four-party alliance government, finally pressed charges in June last year accusing 21 members of Harkatul Jihad Al Islami (Huji) including its top leader Mufti Abdul Hannan and Pintu.

DRAFT EDUCATION POLICY

Deadline for suggestions extended until Oct 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deadline for giving suggestions about the proposed National Education Policy has been extended till October 15.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said this at a press briefing at the Secretariat yesterday.

"Since we are giving special attention to public opinion, we have extended the timeline," he said.

The government had earlier put the draft education policy on the ministry's website on September 7 and asked people to give their opinions on the policy by September 30.

Extending the time limit by 15 days puts pressure on the government, as it has to complete the necessary task to start implementation of the new policy within a certain period, said the education minister.

However, he said they want to move forward by handling this pressure.

Nahid said the government wants to seek opinions from all while implementing the policy and the process will never be politicised.

Education is not an issue that concerns only a certain party or a region or any person or group, he said, adding, "It is a national issue that should get the utmost priority and that is why we want suggestion and cooperation of all."

The government wants to finalise the policy by December and would start implementation of the policy from January next year, said Nahid.

"We want to formulate a pro-people, accessible, democratic, scientific and non-communal education policy which will be changed with the course of time," he said.

Replying to a question, the minister said, "We will take all

the responsibilities after finalising the policy."

"Our main goal is to educate the new generation with modern and scientific education and turn them into human resources," he said.

Asked about the implementation, Nahid said they will implement those policies first that are easy to implement.

He also said implementation is a continuous process that the next governments would continue.

Asked about the funds to implement the policy, he said the policy would be implemented in phases and there is always a scope to increase the allocation.

The growth of the country will increase in the future and they will allocate more funds to the education sector every year, he said.

Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman was also present.

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Advocate Sultana Kamal speaks at a workshop at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Change mindset to ensure rights of sex workers

State minister calls at workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sex workers are not safe even in police custody and often they are forced to have sex there, revealed a draft report at a workshop in the city yesterday.

It said sex workers are often arrested in Rajshahi on Thursday so that they can be kept in police custody on Friday and Saturday to be produced before the court on Sunday, and forced to have sex during custody.

The draft report on the 'Analysis of situation regarding the practice of legal rights by sex workers' was placed by Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) with the support of Centre for Development Service (CDS) and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at the Cirdap auditorium.

It was prepared on the basis of a study in six districts Jessore, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Natore and Ishwardi.

According to the report, 77 percent of sex workers are arrested as they do not give money to police while 53 percent

police do not pay the sex workers after having sex with them.

It also said around 66 percent of sex workers are not produced before the court after their arrest and become the victims of sexual harassment while 75 percent sex workers do not get any help from the police if they become the victims of violence.

Addressing the workshop as chief guest, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Ministry Dr Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury said there is no scope for discriminating sex workers as they have equal rights to live and enjoy all facilities including legal aid as per the constitution.

Stressing the need for changing the mindset towards the sex workers she said not only the government but also the people from all walks of life have to work together to ensure the rights of sex workers.

The state minister stressed the need for providing financial assistance to rehabilitate the sex workers.

She also underscored the

need for training of law enforcement agencies on human rights issue to create awareness among them about the sex workers.

"We have already set up victim support centre at Tejgaon Police Station to provide legal help to destitute people especially women and children and it will be extended to other parts of the country to ensure legal rights of all," said Additional Inspector General of Police NBK Tripura.

Around 100 sex workers from different parts of the country took part at the workshop and they placed some demands to ensure their rights and security.

These included recognising the sex work as profession, giving licence instead of affidavit, setting up more brothels, and changing the law related to vagabonds.

ASK Executive Director Advocate Sultana Kamal and CDS Director Khandaker Humayun Kabir also spoke at the workshop with human rights activist Dr Hamida Hossain in the chair.

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