

'1,639 killed in occupational hazards last yr'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 1,639 workers were killed and 1,858 injured in 2009 in different occupational hazards and workplace violence in the country, said a survey of Bangladesh Occupational Safety Health and Environment Foundation (Oshe) on Thursday.

Oshe revealed the statistics after monitoring 16 national daily newspapers from January 1 to December 31, 2009. The highest number of casualties took place in the garment sector (942) followed by transport sector (927), service sector (411) and construction sector (165).

The survey showed that poor implementation of existing labour law, lack of awareness, lack of safety training programmes, poor wage and defective industrial policy are the key reasons for growing occupational accidents and unrest among workers.

100 landless families in every upazila to get 'khas' lands by June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 100 landless families in every upazila will be provided with 'khas' lands by June this year, Land Minister Md Rezaul Karim Hira said yesterday.

A total of 40,000 landless families will be provided with lands in this programme.

He was speaking at the chief guest at 'Bijoy Utsab 2009' at Jamalpur Sadar Railway Station.

The government has already arranged land for a total of 14,000 families by December 2009 following its electoral pledge, said the minister.

No land grabber will be spared no matter how powerful he is, he said, adding that all the encroachers will be brought under the rule of law.

He also urged representatives at grassroots and committee members to help the government identify landless people to make the project a success.

District Awami League President Prof Shahidullah, Vice President Baki Billah, Mirza Sakawatul Alam Moni, Atikur Rahman Sana, freedom fighter Syed Merazul Haque and upazila Chairman Bijan Kumar Chanda also spoke at the programme chaired by agronomist Md Mokhlesur Rahman.

One to die, four others get 30 years for killing girl

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court on Thursday sentenced a man to death and four others to 30 years' rigorous imprisonment for killing a nine-year-old girl after abduction at Keraniganj in Dhaka in February last year.

The convict with death is Mohammad Manik while Jony Ghosh, Anwar Hossain, Nurul Islam and Mohammad Alauddin were jailed for 30 years.

Judge Rezaul Islam of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-4 handed down the verdict in presence of the convicts at a packed courtroom.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defense had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 22 out of 31 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, Anamika Ghosh, 9, a student of class three of Pacific Kindergarten School at Kamandur in Keraniganj, was kidnapped by group of miscreants while she was returning home from her school at about 11:00am on February 26, 2009.

After receiving a phone call from the abductors, the victim's father Sudharam Ghosh paid Tk 2,10,000 in ransom. But the kidnappers killed the girl and dumped the body in a paddy field under Shivalaya upazila in Manikgonj district.

Police recovered the decomposed body and arrested the kidnappers through mobile tracking from different places.

During the investigation, all the five had confessed to the killing.

Form high-level body to probe extrajudicial killings

Says Human Rights Commission chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) said there was no notable improvement on human rights or law and order situation in the last one year and that extrajudicial killings and torture on BDR members and their deaths in police custody following the BDR mutiny were matters of serious concern.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of the annual Human Rights Report 2009 of ASK yesterday, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury demanded formation of a high-level inquiry committee to probe the cases of extrajudicial killings and make the reports public.

"No civilised nation can support crossfire," he said, observing that there should be strong surveillance system so that no government agency can violate human rights.

All must come forward to alleviate poverty as well as ignorance, which blocks ways to uphold human rights, Justice Chowdhury said.

Morshedul Alam of ASK presented the Human Rights Report 2009 at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city.

ASK Executive Director Advocate Sultana Kamal said,



National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury speaks at a report launching ceremony at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city yesterday. On his right is Ain O Salish Kendra Executive Director Advocate Sultana Kamal and on his left is Morshedul Alam.

"Though the government came to power with a pledge that there will be no single case of crossfire, extrajudicial killings continue unabated. The government rather denied it, saying shootouts are made for self-defence. It denies, because it doesn't want to stop crossfire."

The report said the law and order situation in the last one year saw no significant improvement, rather Chhatra League's campus violence and incidents of tender manipulation, though less than that after the polls in 2001, became security threats for public.

According to the report, 229 people died in custody of the law enforcers in 2009. Of them, 42 were killed in "crossfire" involving Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), 58 in "crossfire" involving police, 23 in custody of Rab and police and two in that of joint forces.

Sultana Kamal, also adviser to a caretaker government, said it is saddening that

opposition condemned the BNP-led government's statements on extrajudicial killings, but the party now in power repeats the same.

"We fear a serious social degradation when such practice continues," she said.

The report said the BDR mutiny at Pilkhana, which killed 78, came as a shock to the new government. Though it avoided more casualties, the problem started in the trial process, particularly in collecting statements from the

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Youths stand by cold-hit poor on New Year's Eve

ANWAR ALLI, Rajshahi

While most people celebrated the New Year with party and picnic on Thursday night in Rajshahi city, a group of youths came out to the streets to mitigate the suffering of homeless poor people who were lying out in the biting cold.

The group of four youths, all are small businessmen, celebrated the New Year by distributing winter clothes among the poor people.

Minutes before the zero hour, Md Shamsuzzaman Mithu of Dari Khorbona, Rajesh Kumar Seroagi of Pathanpara, Masum Sarker of Seroil Colony and Sheikh Mehedi Iqbal Sumon of Sagarpara gathered at Kumarpara with some 250 blankets and winter clothes.

They went to Rajshahi Railway Station and saw a mother, who was hardly able to save her six-month-old child from the chill, holding it on her lap and sitting at a corner of the station veranda. She was sitting there, as the floor was also cold.

The unidentified mother did not delay in expressing her gratitude to the youths for giving her two blankets.

It was 1:30am. There were many other poor people at the station veranda who stood up

in line for getting a blanket. However, an elderly man was stiff enough in cold to advance for winter clothes. He did not miss the eyes of the youths as he was shivering with cold wearing only a torn shirt and lungi.

At the bus terminal, a shutters of bus counters were closed and some of the poor were hardly coping with the cold wearing one or two T-shirts. Blankets were distributed among them too.

Then the youths went to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for distributing winter clothes among poor patients.

"In previous years, we passed the New Year night eating out at costly restaurants or holding picnic donating handsome money. This year, we just thought to share the joy with others who seldom have any real delight," said Sumon, who runs a mobile phone shop.

"Distributing winter clothes, we learnt that there are many of our fellow countrymen who really need help. And it is not difficult to fulfil what they want. If we look after each other, there will be no poverty in society," said Mithu, owner of a cosmetic shop.

Saifuddin Shahin, a local businessman, also provided some winter clothes for distribution.

Speaker wants opposition to return to parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Advocate Abdul Hamid yesterday said it would be easier for him to find solutions to problems if the opposition party returns to the parliament and express their views there instead of doing it outside the House.

He said he is yet to get any response from the opposition after putting efforts to bring them back to the parliament.

The speaker made this remark at the 'Khelaghar Sahitya Utsab' organised by

Kendriya Khelaghar Asar at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium yesterday.

Addressing the programme as the chief guest, Hamid said the dreams that followed the country's independence are still far from being fulfilled, but there have been many achievements that are sure to inspire the nation to move forward.

Many untoward events have hampered the practice of democracy, but the Speaker said he is hopeful Bangladesh will grow as a powerful and

peaceful democratic country that ensures the rights of its citizens.

The speaker also called on the children to practise literature to build a nation without any discrimination.

Noted Indian writer Sunil Gangopadhyay said Bangla is now the fifth most widespread and most important language in the world and it is the responsibility of the children to uphold its prominence in the international community.

"In today's world, learning English and other foreign

languages is really important. But this does not mean that you would ignore your mother tongue Bangla," he said.

Litterateurs Selina Hossain and Hasan Azizul Huq and Khelaghar Kendriya Committee Chairperson Prof Mahfuza Khanam also spoke on the occasion.

Kendriya Khelaghar Asar, an organisation for children, was established on May 2 in 1952 with a view to giving the children a platform to flourish their talents with the ideology of the liberation war.

MODERNISING LIBRARIES
Govt to form committee for recommendations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday said a committee of experts will be formed within a month to make recommendations for modernising the libraries across the country.

"Most of the libraries in our country are lying in a shabby condition while the developed countries are emphasising on expansion of libraries and enriching their collection," he said.

The Minister was addressing a discussion organised by the Department of Information Science and Library Management, Dhaka University (DU), at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) auditorium yesterday to mark its golden jubilee.

He reassured that the stu-

dents of primary, secondary schools, Ibtedaye (primary level of madrasa) and Dakhil classes will certainly get free textbooks from their respective educational institutes at the first working day of the new year (today).

About the proposed education policy, he said, "It is not an education policy of any political party, rather it is a national education policy. This education policy has been formulated aiming at bringing changes in the education system and to ensure time-befitting and quality education."

He asked the teachers not to announce holiday on special days like February 21, March 26 and December 16. "On those days, classes will remain closed but the students will have to come to the institutions to learn

about the history and significance of those days," he added.

He defined the concept of 'Digital Bangladesh' as poverty, corruption, illiteracy-free and modern technology based prosperous Bangladesh.

Presiding over the meeting, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique stressed the need for increasing the number of libraries across the country.

"From educational institutions one can get academic certificate only, but one will have to go to a library for acquiring real knowledge."

DU Pro-VC Harun-ur-Rashid, Treasurer Prof Mizanur Rahman, Chairman of Information Science and Library Management Department Dr Salma Chowdhury also spoke.



Visitors through the Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF)-2010 that began in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

50 hurt in attack on JCD procession in Patuakhali

Section 144 imposed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 50 people were injured in an attack on a JCD procession which was brought out in the district town yesterday on the occasion of the 31st founding anniversary of the associate body of BNP.

The district administration imposed section 144 on PDSA field and its adjacent areas from 7:00am to 10:00pm, as two separate factions were supposed to bring out separate processions from the same venue at the same time.

Former minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury was confined for an hour in a local clinic during the attack. Critically injured Jahid was

sent to Dhaka for better treatment while others took treatment from different hospitals and clinics in the town.

Other injured include JCD leaders Sujon, Mostafa, Moeen, Jahid, Sohag, Moshirur Rahman Milon, Obhi, Mosharraf, Rakibul Hasan, Mohon, Ataullah, Ruma, Jhumur, Shahin, Rina, Jeshmin Jafor, secretary of Mahila Dal of district unit, BNP leader Abu Bakar Siddik alias Mukul.

A procession, led by Toufiq Ali Khan Kabir, president of JCD district unit, was started from in front of the residence of Altaf Hossain around 12:00 noon. When the procession reached Baitul Aman

Madrassa, over 50 miscreants attacked the JCD leaders and activists with sharp weapons.

Altaf Hossain alleged that the ruling party cadres attacked the procession.

Khan Mosharraf Hossain, secretary of district unit Awami League, denied the allegation by the BNP leader, saying that his party rivals attacked the procession. No ruling party men were involved in the attack, he added.

Toufiq called the programme at the PDSA field at 11:00am and another section of JCD led by its Secretary Gazi Ashfaqur Rahman Biplob also called the programme at the same venue at the same.

I'm ready for supreme sacrifice to establish people's rights
Says Rehana
UNB, Sylhet

Bangabandhu's youngest daughter Sheikh Rehana yesterday said she is ready to sacrifice her life like her father to build Sonar Bangla and establish the people's rights.

"It's possible to establish the rights of the deprived people through building a non-communal and happy Bangladesh as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she told a luncheon organised in her honour.

Sylhet City Corporation organised the event at the Gold Club in the city. Mayor Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran, Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury MP and Mahmudus-Samad Chowdhury Kayes MP attended the function.

7 killed in road crashes

METRO DESK

Seven people were killed and 12 others injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka and Mymensingh yesterday.

Staff correspondent reports: A female employee of government central supply depot (CSD) was killed and her niece was injured when a speeding private car hit them on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Karwan Bazar.

Locals caught Ramzan Ali, the driver of the car, and handed him over to Tejaago police.

Witnesses said the private car hit CSD employee Selina Akhter, 35, and her niece Eti Akhter, 22, when they were crossing the road at about 5:30pm.

They were rushed to a private hospital at Farmgate and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared Selina dead.

In another accident, a 35-year-old unidentified man was crushed under the wheels of a

speeding bus at Malibagh DIT Road at around 11:45pm.

In a separate accident, another 50-year-old unidentified man was killed when a running train hit him at Nakhapara in the city's Tejaago area at around 11:30pm.

Our correspondent in Mymensingh adds: Four people, including two women, were killed and seven others injured in a road accident on Mymensingh-Sherpur highway at Chandpur under Phulpur upazila in the district yesterday.

Three of the victims were identified as Asia Khatun, 53, Shahadat Hossain, 17, and Fazr Ali, 60, but the identity of the other woman, aged about 45, could not be known immediately.

The accident took place when a Sherpur-bound truck from Mymensingh collided head-on with a human hauler at around 4:15pm.

The injured were rushed to Phulpur Upazila Health Complex while the bodies were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

WEATHER

Temperature may fall

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Mild cold wave may sweep Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna divisions and the regions of Comilla and Srimongal and night temperature may fall slightly, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:23pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 26.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 7.3 degrees at Chuadanga.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	23.0	13.8	75	78
Chittagong	24.1	14.3	78	65
Rajshahi	20.4	10.6	96	78
Khulna	23.5	11.5	78	71
Barisal	24.5	10.4	86	84
Sylhet	25.5	12.3	100	72
Cox's Bazar	26.5	16.0	70	61

TODAY

Memorial meeting
Bangla Academy organises a memorial meeting to mark the 94th birth anniversary of noted litterateur Shawkat Osman. Venue: Bangla Academy seminar room. Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion
Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will hold a discussion to mark the 24th founding anniversary of the Rokeya Sadan. Venue: Sufia Kamla Bhaban, Segunbagicha. Time: 4:00pm.

Memorial meeting
A memorial meeting will be held to pay tribute to the memories of Swadesh Ranjan Basu. Venue: National Academy for Planning and Development. Time: 6:30pm.

Rotary Dhaka Central
The regular meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30pm.