

Notice on CCC for filling up Laldighi

City corporation making swimming pool and building stage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (Bela) yesterday served a legal notice on Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) as it is making a swimming pool by filling up Laldighi, the historic water body, in the port city.

The CCC authorities are filling up Laldighi partially to make a swimming pool and a stage. They are also building a retaining wall to separate the swimming pool site and the stage.

The notice sent to the CCC authorities said Laldighi is a witness to a number of historic events. People who visit Chittagong from

outside take a rest on its bank and mosque-going Muslim people perform their ablutions using its water.

Besides, the water body plays an important role in maintaining biological diversity of the second largest city of the country, it added.

Laldighi bears testimony to a number of protests, including the anti-British movement, historic language movement and the liberation war.

Copies of the notice were also served on secretaries to environment and forests and land ministries, chairman of Chittagong Development Authority, department of environment, Chittagong and a concerned CCC ward councillor.



Twenty-seven accused of the 44 Rifle Battalion were hauled before the BDR Special Court-5 in shackles and civvies at the Darbar Hall of Bangladesh Rifles headquarters in Pilkhana yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

BAR ON MUFTI SHAHIDUL SC stays HC order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday stayed for a week a High Court (HC) order that directed the government to allow former Islami Oikya Jote lawmaker Mufti Shahidul Islam to go abroad.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division Justice Md Muzammel Hossain passed the order upon a government petition seeking stay on the HC order.

The judge also asked the government to file a regular leave to appeal petition with the SC against the HC order within a week.

During the hearing yesterday, Additional Attorney General MK Rahman told the court that Mufti Shahidul is a listed war criminal suspect.

If he is allowed to go abroad, the investigation into the allegations against him will be hampered, he said, praying to the court to stay the HC order.

Enact law to ensure rights of women with disabilities

Urge rights activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rights activists have called for enacting a new law in the light of UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure rights of women with disabilities and their full participation in the mainstream activities.

They pointed out that women with disabilities face extra threats to personal security because of their vulnerable condition.

Women with disabilities are easy target of physical, sexual and psychological abuse, neglect and many other forms of discrimination, which often go unreported for lack of social and legal support, they added.

According to a study conducted by Action on Disability and Development (ADD), there were about 70 cases of violence against persons with disabilities in the last two years. Of the total number, 66 victims were women with disabilities who faced violence, includ-

ing rape and murder.

Mentally challenged women face toughest consequences, they study added.

The rights activists said this at a seminar organised by National Council of Disabled Women at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

They called on the government not to treat the issues of persons with disabilities on the basis of charity.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said neglect of society and attitude towards women with disabilities lead to their immense suffering. If women are termed as marginalised, women with disabilities are at the bottom.

Issues of women with disabilities are now addressed by three ministries -- social welfare, women's affairs and education. The government needs to coordinate these three ministries and increase allocation for this sector, he added.

There are no recent data available on challenged women in the country. According to a survey conducted by World Health Organisation, persons with disabilities constitute about 10 percent of the population in Bangladesh, which is about 15 million.

Different non-government organisations have mentioned that there are roughly 7.5 million women with disabilities in the country. Only two percent of these women get the opportunity of education.

The speakers stressed the need for education for women with disabilities linking with education ministry instead of social welfare ministry, introducing special stipend for them, including issues of women with disabilities in the curriculum and conducting training for teachers on special education, especially Braille and sign language.

Mosharraf Hossain, country director of ADD, also spoke, among others.

Salam Pintu on 4-day remand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

BNP leader and former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu was placed on a four-day remand in a case filed in connection with the bomb attack on Awami League office in Chasara in 2001.

Chief Judicial Magistrate of Narayanganj Md Sharifur Rahman passed the remand order after the Criminal Investigating Department produced Pintu before the court.

Earlier, the BNP leader was placed on a total of ten days' remand in three phases in the case.

Pintu was produced before the court yesterday morning amid tight security.

CID, after conclusion of Pintu's 3rd round of remand on November 25, 2009, produced him before the court and sought another five days' remand, but the remand hearing was deferred several times as he was sick.

War heroines demand trial of war criminals

BSS, Dhaka

Women who were repressed by the Pakistani occupation forces during the liberation war in 1971 have demanded trial of the war criminals.

Locally known as Biranganas, the women also demanded dignity in society and means to survive.

They raised the demands in a documentary titled 'Cries of Birangana Women and Demand for Justice' directed by Shafiqul Islam Kajal.

"Is our duty finished after liberating the country? When would trial of the collaborators be held?" questioned Birangana Achhiya of Kobdaspur village in Sirajganj.

Surya Begum, 52, Bahatan Begum, 70, Noorjahan Begum, 50, Rahela, 52, Rahima, 72, and Acchiya, 50, demanded trial of the war collaborators in Sirajganj who are responsible for mishaps in their (women's) lives.

They questioned why they would be neglected in the society. Have they really committed any sin? Why the collaborators - Quddus of Kobdaspur, Sayeed of Sayadhangara, Badsha of Rahmatganj - were not punished even after committing heinous crimes?

Birangana Ayesha said, "The freedom fighters had fought with arms, but we had sacrificed our dignity and happiness. The freedom fight-

ers get allowances and state honour after death, but we do not even get funeral."

The Biranganas do not want families, husbands, children, but meals twice a day and recognition from the state.

The cries and sorrows of the Biranganas have been reflected in the documentary by Shafiqul Islam Kajal.

Kajal told BSS in Mujibnagar recently that he got inspiration to make the documentary from the life of a Birangana, Manjura.

He saw the struggling life of Manjura from his childhood and heard from his mother and neighbours about Manjura's sacrifice during the Liberation War.

Manjura died on May 19, 1998, but there was none to conduct her funeral. Even the progressive people did not come forward to take part in her funeral prayers. Later, she was buried on the evening of May 19 with the help of a local Haji.

Kajal said trial of the war criminals should be held quickly. Holding trial of the culprits would be showing honour to the Biranganas, he observed.

He also stressed the need for rehabilitating the Biranganas. This will not require a large amount of money, he said.



Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, and Lady Syeda Sarwat Abed, director of Brac University Centre for Languages, exchange documents after signing an agreement at the newspaper's office in the city on April 25 for the Robi-The Daily Star English in Schools (EIS) programme. Under the deal, Brac University CFL will develop English-learning materials for the EIS programme, which currently operates in 1,000 secondary schools across the country. Brac University Vice Chancellor Dr Ainun Nishat and members of The Daily Star and Brac University were present at the agreement signing ceremony.

PHOTO: STAR

Nat'l policy on occupational health demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) formed a human chain yesterday demanding a national policy on occupational health and safety.

The programme was held in front of the National Press Club in the city.

Speakers gave an account of total deaths and injuries of the workers in their respective jobs across the country.

A study conducted by OSHE said in 2009, some 1,639 workers died and 1,858 were left with injuries in several accidents related to their jobs. It was carried out based on the newspaper reports.

Again, 394 workers died and 479 workers got injured at their workplaces in incidents like explosion, fire, electrocution and falling from height while 367 died and 883 got injured over workplace violence.

The speakers said though Bangladesh Labour Law 2006 has different provisions securing health and safety of workers, it requires an immediate formulation of rules to implement the law for their interests.

Saki Rezwana, chairperson of OSHE, Mamunur Rashid, general secretary of Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress, Omar Faruk, programme officer of OSHE, and Mina Pande, project coordinator of Building and Woodworkers International (BWI), were present at the programme.

Build economically self-reliant country

President tells AUST convocation

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday emphasized building the country as economically self-reliant with a view to making its independence meaningful.

"Today we're the citizens of an independent and sovereign country... it is responsibility of all particularly the young generation to build the country as economically self-reliant for making the independence meaningful," he said.

The president made the remarks while presiding over the

4th convocation of Ahasanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST) at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid was the special guest at the function while Quazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), was the convocation speaker.

Zillur said it should be ensured that every citizen of the country can have two handfuls of rice twice a day and also live in peace."

Congratulating the gradu-

ates, he urged them to join the nation-building by giving top priority to honesty and sincerity and also showing their talents and creativity.

"You'll be a bridge between the past and the present. And with your success, Bangladesh will become the best among the South Asian countries," he said.

About the role of the universities, he said the activities of the universities should be multifarious in quest of knowledge so they could play important role in creating skilled manpower by facilitating endless exercises of knowledge, creative activities and the researches.

Zillur hoped that the private universities would fix reasonable tuition fees by considering the country's overall socio-economic condition.

AUST Vice Chancellor Prof Dr M Anwar Hossain and president of Ahsania Mission Kazi Rafiqul Alam also spoke on the occasion.

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam and former attorney general Barrister Rafique-ul-Huq were present at the function.

Mithila Barua, Muhammad Imranur Rahman Mazumder and Muhammad Qumrul Ahsan were awarded Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah Padak for their outstanding academic results.

EC independent, sovereign body

Says AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League (AL) yesterday termed the present Election Commission (EC) a 'completely independent and sovereign' organisation as it held the December 29 parliamentary election and some other by-polls in a free, fair and credible manner.

"The present EC is independent and sovereign and has efforts to make it more strengthened to hold free, fair and credible elections," AL acting general secretary Mahubul Alam Hanif told reporters at a press conference at the party chief's political office in Dhanmondi.

The AL label to EC came a day after BNP formally demanded resignation of chief election commissioner (CEC) and two other election commissioners for failing to perform neutrality in holding the Bholra-3 by-election.

Addressing the press conference, AL advisory council member Tofail Ahmed strongly criticised Moudud for raising question about the morality of EC.

It is not EC, rather Moudud has no morality as he changed parties and spoke against BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia for several times, he added.

About BNP's statement that people would give a befitting reply to AL through voting in next parliamentary elections for what it did centring the Bholra-3 by-election, Tofail suggested the main opposition wait for the next elections to assess public support for them.

The Bholra-3 by-election was held in a free, fair and credible manner and people mandated AL candidate to win, the AL leader said, saying that BNP tried to create an issue centring the poll from the very beginning.

50 BNP leaders of Dinajpur join AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 50 leaders of main opposition BNP, led by former lawmaker Mojibar Rahman of Birol upazila in Dinajpur, yesterday joined the ruling Awami League, terming that BNP did not get involved in pro-people politics.

Handing over a bouquet to AL Advisory Council Member Tofail Ahmed and party's acting general secretary Mahubul Alam Hanif, the BNP leaders joined the ruling party chanting slogans 'Joy Bangladesh Joy Bangabandhu'.

Addressing the joining function at AL president's political office at Dhanmondi, Mojibar Rahman, also president of BNP's Birol upazila unit of Dinajpur district, said, "We have rejected the politics of BNP as it does not do politics for the welfare of the people."

Mojibar was elected as a BNP lawmaker in the 15 February election in 1996 from Dinajpur-2 constituency [Birol-Bochaganj upazilas].

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