

Dr Kamal urges govt to stop politicisation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday voiced deep concern over mounting pressure that the ruling Awami League men are putting on government officials to appoint the party activists to different jobs.

He also condemned the lawmakers who blazed with fury over the press in the parliament.

Dr Kamal was addressing his party's standing committee meeting at the party office in the city, a press release said.

The ruling party men are pressing the government officials to appoint their fellows to different jobs in districts including Pabna and Panchagar.

He said a section of AL men also remain engaged in admission and recruitment trade, urging to take necessary measures to stop politicisation of administration.

Commander (ret'd) Abdur Rouf, advocate Subrata Chowdhury and Jamaluddin Ahmed, among others, also spoke at the meeting.



Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina from inside her vehicle speaks to the party men outside the Shahjalal International Airport in the city yesterday, left, after attending 65th United Nations General Assembly in New York. Leaders and workers of the party, right, through the road in front of the airport to congratulate her on getting award for attaining Millennium Development Goals.



PHOTO: STAR

Mental patients on rise for extra marital affairs, say experts

ALPHA ARZU

The number of mental patients having extra marital affairs is increasing significantly in the country, experts say.

The experts at National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) say extra marital affairs have a bad impact on the families and the society.

Prof Golam Rabbani, director of the NIMH, told The Daily Star that "Such relations always create problems in families and hamper mental development of children."

The major change in family and social life, contempt for social and religious norms, non-dependency and extreme self-reliance between couples, lack of sharing of family matters, and hidden mental disorder are among other causes of extra marital affairs, the director added.

He also said that though such occurrences are not prominent in society generally, the institute frequently gets such cases. In fact, the situation is very serious, but since only conscious couples are seeking professional help from psychiatrists, the real magnitude of the phenomenon remains unknown.

Meanwhile, poor and illiterate people go to religious clerics and quacks or try to find other ways of solving these problems, said Prof Rabbani, also the president of Bangladesh Association of Child and Adolescent Mental Health.

He strongly believes that man or woman who gets involved in an extra marital affair forgets that it might cause devastation in the future of her/his family members. The children are usually the worst affected. They feel insecure in staying with such parents, but hardly find any alternate asylum.

"On an average, 80 mentally disturbed people visit the hospital a day. About 40 percent of them become mentally disordered due to the extra marital relationships. Some are tormented by spousal infidelity, others are bothered by their fiancé's interest in other girls or boys," said Dr Zillur Kamal, associate professor of the institute.

The hospital is equipped to handle both adults and children. The institute-cum-hospital has 62 psychiatrists, including professors and other medical officers. Counselling is also available for patients.

"Two of my patients divorced their

partners' last week for extra marital affairs. This is common situation in the country, which should be solved by creating awareness to make people sympathetic, respectful and affectionate," said Professor of Psychiatry Jhunu Shamsunnahar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

"In less serious cases, the patients are mostly handled by giving counselling to improve their confidence and self-reliance. We suggest counselling because it really helps get relief from frustrating situations," added the professor.

"In serious cases, the patients are also provided with medication for relaxation of the condition," she said.

Sonali Das (not her real name) came to the outdoor department of NIMH, saying that she was feeling insecure and helpless as her husband was involved with a girl and so, she wanted to consult a psychiatrist.

She said, "When my husband goes to office or any other work, I feel so insecure and feel that he went come back just as he threatened to do when I asked him about the involvement."

"I can not bear the pain. I feel cheated, humiliated and deprived.

Society and family are not helping me. Every body says that I have failed to keep my husband attracted to me. Sometimes they even say that I should tolerate it," said Sonali, who got married 17 years ago and has three children.

Explaining a patients' condition at the NIMH, Prof Golam Rabbani said that the 29-year-old man from Jhenidah, is now under treatment as he had tried to commit suicide after finding out about his wife's illicit affair with one of his friends.

He also pointed out relevant recent incidents that received media attention, like the case of Rita's suicide with her two kids and other cases of parents being suspected of killing their children for extra marital affairs. "All these incidents indicate the vulnerable social situation which gets created from such illicit relations," said the mental health expert.

"Considering that family is one critically important institution, the couples should work with commitment and trust. Every person should be committed towards their partners and other family members," said Mehtab Khanam, professor of psychology at the University of Dhaka.

Enact domestic violence act, speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must speedily pass the domestic violence act and recognise prostitution as a profession to prevent repression against women, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Care Bangladesh organised the discussion on the findings of a three-year project fashioned Protirodh (resistance) at the city's Brac Centre Inn.

Dr Hamida Hossain, a human right activist and chairperson of Ain O Salish Kendra, said speedy enactment of the domestic violence act and its proper enforcement would help deter violence against women, citing similar law in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia.

The project was implemented in three district headquarters---Dhaka, Khulna and Tangail and three upazilas of Dinajpur with certain pilot programmes to prevent violence against sex workers, domestic violence and child marriage.

The project period comes to end today. Joya Shikder, president of Sex Workers Network of Bangladesh, said that sex work must be recognised as a profession and treated with dignity.

Aklima Begum, project director of

Protirodh in Tangail and president of Narimukti Sangha of the district said sex workers are repressed by various classes of people, including local thugs, political activists and those in the administration.

In 14 percent of the cases, police violate sex workers, traffickers, pimps and sex workers leaders are responsible for violence in 23 and 20 percent of the cases respectively, according to the final report on the project.

AKM Shahidul Hoque, commissioner of Dhaka metropolitan police, said that it is not clear in the report how police repress the sex workers.

Prostitution is not legally recognised as a profession in Bangladesh, he said adding, "But sex business is going on in the country."

However, a woman aged 18 years has the rights to make a declaration before a first class magistrate to take up prostitution as a profession.

A total of 14,282 cases of women repression were recorded with police stations in 2008 while 12, 832 in the following year and 10,33 until August this year.

Abul Hossain, project director of a project on prevention of women and child repression in the ministry of women and children affairs, said the domestic violence act is supposed to be passed in the next session of the parliament.

HC judge's son held for acid throwing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was arrested yesterday at the city's Gulshan for his alleged involvement in throwing acid on a friend.

Following the arrest, Safayet Ahmed Chowdhury, 25, was produced before a Dhaka court that placed him on remand for a day.

Gulshan police arrested Safayet after his car driver Shaheen and Zahid Hasan, a hired goon, arrested earlier made a confessional statement that they had thrown acid on Sabri-E-Zaman, 24, executive (IT) of Ericksson Bangladesh, on Safayet's instructions.

Police said Shaheen and Zahid threw acid on Sabri on August 5 around 2:00pm when Sabri was coming out of his Gulshan office.

Sabri's father retired wing commander Asaduzzaman the same day filed a case with Gulshan Police Station in this regard.

Sub-Inspector Mustafizur Rahman, also investigation officer of the case, said Gulshan police along with a team of Rapid Action Battalion arrested Shaheen and Zahid on September 25.

The two arrestees then made the confessional statement under section 164.

Sabri's uncle Mohammad Milon told The Daily Star that about five months before the incident Sabri, son of a High Court judge and a businessman, introduced Mehrin to Sabri over the telephone and since then they became intimate. At one stage Mehrin was pressurising Sabri to marry her but Sabri denied doing so.

Mehrin informed Safayet about the matter, and Safayet set Shaheen and Zahid to attack Sabri, Milon said.

He also said Sabri's right portion of the face, chest and belly were critically burnt. Sabri took treatment in Singapore and is yet to recover fully.

After the arrest, Safayet's mother Salma along with a lawyer went to Gulshan Police Station.



Outgoing Chief Justice M Fazlul Karim calls on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Campaign for RTI begins in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) and the YES Group of Sachetang Nagorik Committee (Sanak), Chittagong city unit, launched a campaign in Chittagong city yesterday for proper implementation of the Right to Information Act, 2009.

Another objective of the campaign is to disseminate information about the act among the people to make them beneficiary of the act, said a press release.

Advocate Akhter Kabir Chowdhury, convenor of the Sanak-TIB, Chittagong city unit, inaugurated the campaign in front of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) while its member Shariar Khaled, YES Group member and TIB officials, were present.

Cross section of people joined the function and demanded proper implementation of the act to ensure information about different government, non-government and autonomous organisations.

Campaigners on a truck marched through different streets of the city.

Eco-tax on polluters on cards

Hasan Mahmud says govt to introduce 'Polluters pay principle' to protect environment

BSS, DHAKA

The government is actively considering to include "Polluters pay principle" in the taxation rule to make the polluters responsible for tax payment according to the degree of pollution.

State Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said this while he was inaugurating a workshop on 'Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory' at National Press Club in the city.

"We are trying to introduce the 'polluter pay principle' to make the parties more responsible which produce more pollution and imposing additional tax on them for the damage done to the natural environment," he said.

Once the rule comes into effect, the government may impose eco-tax on polluters, which essentially reduces the emission of GHGs, he said.

Department of Environment (DoE) organised the workshop to impart knowledge to officials of the department to prepare reliable GHG inventory.

Bangladesh, as a member of the UNFCCC, needs to make GHG inventory as part of Second National Communication (SNC) by the Convention according to dates set by the Conference of Parties (COP).

Dr Hasan said Bangladesh with only 0.06 gigatons of emission per capita, is one of the lowest GHG emitters. But, the country, as the worst victim, can understand the severity of the climate change.

"That's why we have undertaken many voluntary initiatives to reduce our carbon

footprint even before getting any foreign support," he said, calling for united efforts to reduce the global warming below 1.5 degree.

Secretary of the Minister of Environment and Forests Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder and Resident Representative of the UNDP Stefan Prienser attended the function as the special guests with Director General of the DOE Monwar Islam in the chair.

"We have voluntarily trying for reducing our emission though mitigation is not obligatory for us," Dr Hasan said, adding that the government is making efforts to promote hybrid transport, mass transportation and train and water communications.

Referring to the enactment of the Paribesh Ain 2010, he said Paribesh Adalat Ain-2010 will also be passed in the present sitting of the parliament to set up Environment Court in every district.

Praising Bangladesh's leadership in the international forum of climate negotiation, UNDP country representative said climate change is constraining the ability of developing countries like Bangladesh to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development objectives.

The Second National Communication comprised five major activities which include an analysis of national circumstances to portray geographic and socio-economic settings of Bangladesh and sector specific vulnerability due to climate change.

Other activities under the programme are preparing a GHG emission inventory for various sectors, identification of the programmes for mitigation and adaptation and capacity building and awareness raising.

Unidentified caller issues death threat to tourism minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader received another "threat" via a mobile text message yesterday.

The message read: "You will face dire consequences," Quader's Personal Assistant advocate Mohammad Abu Tayeb told The Daily Star.

Quader, also a presidium member of the Jatiya Party, received the text message from an unidentified caller around 9:30am, said Tayeb.

A general diary has been filed with Paltan Police Station in this regard.

Earlier, on August 2009, the minister received a message on his phone that read: "Time and tide wait for none but someone will be waiting for you. Do you know who he is? He is Azrail. He will come to take away your soul. So, beware! It is high time."

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