

# Five govt offices violate RTI act: Survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Gross violation of Right to Information (RTI) Act and neglects and the narrow mindedness of officials to expose information still hinder the law's implementation at five government organisations in Rajshahi, reveals a survey.

Only Rajshahi Metropolitan Police, out of the five organisations, provided information duly, as its officials were trained on the law that came to effect in July 2009, says the survey.

Rajshahi City Corporation, Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, the district Land Office, and Primary Education Office are the remaining organisations surveyed.

Rajshahi unit of Shacheton Nagorik Committee (Shonac), an organisation run by Transparency International of Bangladesh (TIB), published the report at a press conference at its office in Rajshahi city yesterday.

It said Shonac's Youth Engagement and Support (YES) group members conducted the survey in between August 26 and October 6, with their personal identities as citizens of the country.

"Actually we wanted to know how much has been achieved in proper information flow at government level after one year of enactment of the law," said Abdus Salam, the Shonac unit convener.

He said the survey findings will be shared with respective organisations for their necessary corrections.

The survey says at least three of the organisations declined even to receive the application form of information seekers, which is a sheer neglect to the RTI Act.

The applicants were harassed when their applications ran from table to table in four organisations, and they were confronted with various questions like "what will you do with the information?"

One organisation denied providing information on plea of the month of Ramadan which the survey said a clear attitude to harass people in violation of RTI Act.

The survey finds none of the organisations have appointed any information officer, that is mandatory, and made available no application forms, although the law contains provisions for these to maintain.

Two organisations have officials assigned for providing information, one of them was not available in eight workdays and he provided incomplete information on the 17th day, says the survey.

Two organisations declined to provide information, and they did not explain why they failed, which also violates the Act.

The survey recommended six points including shunning the culture of secrecy, appointing information officers, preserving information properly and digitalising the information providing system.

Banasri Halder read out the report prepared by YES group team leader Saiful Islam.



The daily Prothom Alo organises a roundtable on "Freedom of Mass Media and Accountability" in the conference room of its office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)



State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam receives the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award, 2010 from Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin at a function organised by Mahatma Gandhi Research Council in the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

## Hedayetullah new information secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hedayetullah Al Mamoon, ndc, former cultural secretary, joined the information ministry as its secretary yesterday.

Hedayetullah earlier also performed his duty at the civil aviation and tourism ministry, said a press release.

He is an official of 1982 batch of BCS.

## Girl dies in motorcycle fall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A young girl died as she fell from a motorcycle near Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city while riding behind her friend on way to Manipur in Mirpur last night.

The victim, Shikha Begum, 30, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital by the friend, Abdul Khalid Khan, a private company employee, where doctors declared her dead around 10:00pm.

Khalid said Shikha fell due to a sudden jolt of the motorcycle while passing Bangabandhu International Conference Centre at 9:30pm.

Officer-in-Charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station Reaz Hossain said they heard about the incident and will take necessary steps in this regard.

## Sylhet's fertility rate 1 percent higher than the national

Says study identifying illiteracy, low contraceptive use behind the failure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fertility rate in Sylhet is 3.7 percent, 1 percent higher than the national fertility rate, due to lower use of contraceptives, finds a study.

The division's birth-to-birth interval (of 24 months) rate is also 11 percent higher than the national rate of 26 percent. Use of contraceptives among women is only 31 percent in this division, 25 percent lower than the national rate.

The research titled "Healthy Fertility Study" was conducted by the US-based non-government organisation, ACCESS-FP, Bloomberg School of Public Health and Shimantik with the support of USAID.

The findings were disseminated at a meeting yesterday jointly organised by Health and Family Welfare Department of Sylhet and Healthy Fertility Study Team at Hotel Westin in the city.

Salahuddin Ahmed, Dr Saifuddin Ahmed and Catherine McKaig of the study team presented the research paper, which focused on integration of family planning, relevant materials and health services for the newborn in Sylhet division.

The study says the time between two births

is also higher in Sylhet than any other divisions of the country. The gap of two consecutive births is estimated to be less than 24 months, it says.

The study found the reasons behind higher growth rate to be illiteracy, early marriage and lack of awareness among the poor people, especially women.

In that region, 26 percent of couples remain out of family planning, which is 9 percent higher than the national rate.

The research said although many women want to delay pregnancy, they fail to help themselves because of socio economic reasons.

They have limited decision-making powers regarding use of contraceptives, limited access to health services and misconceptions on the side effects of using contraceptives.

Prof Dr Syed Modasser Ali, adviser to the prime minister, said, "To ensure family planning services equitably across Bangladesh, we, as a community must focus more efforts in Sylhet through the government and civil society in partnership."

Director General of Family Planning, Dilruba, was also present.

## DIPU TO VISIT TRIPURA

Trade, connectivity top agendas

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Connectivity and increase of trade and commerce with India's seven North-Eastern states will dominate Foreign Minister Dipu Moni's talk with Tripura's state government during her upcoming visit.

Official sources said the foreign minister will pay a 2-day visit to Tripura to attend the inauguration of a Liberation War monument and a friendship park there being constructed by the Tripura state government.

Official sources added that she may pay the visit on November 10 to 11 if her health condition improves. If not, then she will visit Tripura after Eid-ul-Azha.

They said both Bangladesh and India laid utmost importance on connectivity and trade between Bangladesh and the Northeastern states, popularly known as seven sisters.

Dipu Moni is due to hold meetings with Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar and Governor of Tripura DY Patil.

She is expected to attend the opening ceremony of Sabroom Land Customs, which has recently been established to strengthen export-import with the seven states.

Although India is going to start the Sabroom Land Customs Station, but Bangladesh is yet to begin the process to start such a station on its side.

Foreign ministry officials said Dipu Moni, in her talks with Tripura chief minister and governor, will ask for allowing Bangladeshi products into the Indian states.

## Garment worker killed in Gazipur

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Unknown criminals killed a garment worker at South Solna bazar area under Sadar upazila of the district Wednesday night.

The deceased was identified as Yasin Chowdhury, 35, of the same area.

Family sources said Yesin came from his work around 7:00pm on Wednesday night. After having his meal he went to bed.

Suddenly he went out side of his house after responding to a cell phone call from an unidentified person.

Yesterday morning his body having some injury marks was found in a bamboo cluster near his residence.

On information, Joydebpur police recovered the body and sent it to hospital morgue.

Police suspected that assailants might have strangled Yasin.

Investigation Officer SM Kamrul of the police station said a long-standing dispute over a piece of land with his cousin's or a family feud with his wife might be the reason behind the murder.

Sultan Uddin, brother of the deceased, filed a case with the police station in this connection.

## MBBS admission test today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A combined MBBS admission test for both the public and private medical colleges is going to be held today for the first time.

About eight candidates will compete for each of the 5,859 MBBS seats in a one-hour long admission test, starting at 10:00am.

"From this academic year, we are going to conduct the admission tests both for Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) for public and private institutions jointly, to ensure minimum standard of the physicians," said Prof Khandaker Shefayet Ullah, director of medical education of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Students lacking minimum educational qualifications earlier used their family's riches to manage seats at private medical colleges, he added.

Candidates can know about their seat planning from the website <http://www.dghs.gov.bd>

The first 2,509 successful candidates would be admitted to 18 public medical colleges, while the remaining 3,350 would go to 43 private medical colleges.

Prof Shefayet Ullah said a total of 20 seats are reserved for indigenous students, 80 for foreign students and two percent of total seats for the children of freedom fighters.

Results will be announced within a week and it will be available on the DGHS website.

He requested the dental medical college admission seekers to collect their admission forms from the three public and 12 private dental medical colleges from October 23 to November 4.

The admission test for the BDS course is scheduled for December 3. There are 210 seats at three public and 770 seats at 12 private dental medical colleges.

The candidates can also get their results on mobile phones, health ministry officials said.

## Bangladesh war memorial park at Tripura likely to open Nov 10

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Tripura state government will construct a mausoleum and memorial park in memory of the Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971, official sources said.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni will inaugurate the construction works of the Liberation War monument and the friendship park likely on November 10. Chief Minister of Tripura Manik Sarkar will be present at the inaugural session.

Officials of the foreign ministry said the monument and the park will be constructed at Chittokhola in frontier of Bilonia, 130km away from Agartala at a cost of Rs 2.30 crore. Tripura state government will bear the entire cost of the structure.

At the park, there will be a sculpture of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and a 52-feet tall tower from where Bangladesh's districts like Comilla, Feni and a part of Noakhali could be seen.

The park is being constructed on a land of 20-hectore given by the Tripura forest department.

Besides, there will also be a museum where arms, ammunitions, photographs, and newspaper clippings of the War of Liberation will be preserved for public display.

The village Chittokhola became famous during the War of Liberation, as a strong base along with a training centre of Bangladeshi freedom fighters was there.

The freedom fighters usually launched attacks on Pakistani occupation forces from Chittokhola to Noakhali, Feni and Comilla areas.

Foreign ministry sources said Dipu Moni, during her two-day visit in Tripura, will hold bilateral talks with Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar and is expected to visit land port.

## World Vision gets new ED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jan Gerhardus De Waal has assumed office as the executive director (ED) of World Vision Bangladesh, said a press release yesterday.

Skilled in management and leadership, Waal also is experienced in rural development, development studies and micro-enterprise development.

World Vision, a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation, is working for children, families and other communities to help them exploit their potential by defeating poverty and injustice.

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Send your comments & contribution to [starsight@thedailystar.net](mailto:starsight@thedailystar.net)

Rafi Hossain  
19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh. Fax: 880-2-8125155  
email: [starsight@thedailystar.net](mailto:starsight@thedailystar.net)  
[www.thedailystar.net/insight](http://www.thedailystar.net/insight)

### Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society

22 Dhanmondi, Road 2, Dhaka 1205, Registration No. S-8683

#### Postponement of Regional Conference on Hospital Pharmacy

This is for information of all concerned that due to certain unforeseen circumstances the South East Asian Regional Conference on Hospital Pharmacy scheduled on 23-24 October 2010, has been postponed until a new date to be notified later. The registered participants will be receiving a letter soon with detailed information in this context. We sincerely regret inconveniences caused to the participants and patrons in this regard.

Md. Nasser Shahrear Zahedee  
President

Prof. Dr. Md. Habibur Rahman  
General Secretary