

REPRESSION OF WOMEN 'Victims should have right to appoint lawyers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General Mahub-e Alam yesterday said victims in women repression cases should be given the right to appoint lawyers along with public prosecutors to ensure justice.

"According to the existing legal system, Public Prosecutor (PP) deals women repression cases on behalf of the victims. This leaves a scope to influence the PP by the accused.

"If victims have the right to appoint lawyers, possibility of attaining justice is increased," he explained while addressing a view exchange meeting as the chief guest.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) organised the meeting on implementation of aid activities to prevent repression on women, with government lawyers at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

Stressing the need to stop stalking and Fatwa, the attorney general said the law should be stricter and the convict should be strictly punished.

Daughters, in the absence of a son, should get a share of the family property when the father dies, he said and called upon the organisers to raise their voice to formulate a law regarding the matter.

Assistant General Secretary of BMP Advocate Masuda Rehana Begum presented a paper at the meeting.

Masuda, in her paper, said there are 7,167 cases of repression on women under trial, 450 of which are age-old, at the five women and children repression prevention tribunals in Dhaka.

Deputy attorney generals, assistant attorney generals, public prosecutors and lawyers also addressed the programme. President of BMP Ayesha Khanam presided over the meeting.



Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding an end to the cultivation of tobacco to ensure food security.

Law to protect victims, witnesses on cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is working to formulate a new law to protect victims and witnesses of crimes, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed has said.

"Fair trial of many important cases is being hampered due to insecurity of the victims and witnesses," he said.

The minister has been expressing concern over the issue since taking office nearly two years ago.

Many witnesses feel insecure to appear before the court or report a crime to the law enforcers, he observed at a workshop in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) organised the programme titled "Victim and witness protection: an imperative measure for an inherent right" at Brac Centre Inn.

Shafique, however, said it is impossible for the government to provide protection for all the victims and witnesses due to resource shortages. The government, therefore, will identify those who need protection.

A ballpark estimate is that at least 60% cases in every court suffer for witnesses are unwilling to testify, a number of public prosecutors at Dhaka judge's court told The Daily Star in August this year.

They said numerous are the instances where cases could not be resolved even in 20 years due to absence of witnesses.

Other discussants at the workshop said endurance of a country's legal system is much dependent on how the victims and witnesses are protected, and also how the accused persons' rights are upheld.

"Protection is a right of every victim," said Ridwanul Hoque, assistant professor of law at Dhaka University. Physical, mental, financial and social wellbeing of a victim must be ensured, he added.

He also opined that Bangladesh can consider forming "protection units" that many western countries have introduced to safeguard victims and witnesses.

Chanchal Mukherjee, assistant programme manager of BNWLA, presented the keynote paper.

"The existing laws are insufficient to protect victims," he said, adding that many victims dare not file a case for security reasons.

People harassing the victims or witnesses must face severe punishment, Mukherjee, an advocate, said quoting a draft law that BNWLA prepared to protect victims and witnesses.

BNWLA recommends shelter, special police protection and healthcare service for the victims and witnesses for free.

Other speakers said rights of the accused persons should also be upheld.

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, District Judge and Director of National Legal Aid Service Sayed Aminul Islam, BNWLA President Fawzia Karim Firoze, Vice-president Fahima Nasrin and Executive Director Salma Ali, among others, spoke at the programme.

Call to formulate policy to strengthen local govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some eminent personalities yesterday stressed the need for formulation of policies to strengthen local government administration decentralising power in every tier of administration.

The process of decentralising power is facing setback due to absence of specific policies that decelerates dynamism of the local government activities, they said.

This was stated at a press conference organised by the Governance Advocacy Forum, an alliance of 31 organisations, at the National Press Club.

The forum will also hold national convention on democratic decentralisation on October 30 in the city to press the government for formulation and implementation of policies for democratic decentralisation of administrative power.

Addressing the press conference, Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) and president of the national committee of the national convention, said the local government institutions are the main components for accelerating the country's development. But these components are getting dysfunctional day by day in

absence of decentralisation of power.

So the government need to formulate and implement policies for decentralisation of power to constitute effective relationship between local government and central government administration, he said.

Policy makers have ignored the constitution repeatedly by not decentralising power

Qazi also laid emphasis on more participation of people in the local government administration to make it more effective and strong.

Justice Golam Rabbani, presidium member of the national committee of the national convention, in his speech

said the policy makers have ignored the country's constitution repeatedly by not decentralising the power that mentioned in the constitution.

"Our constitution has bestowed all sorts of power to the people. So implementation of policies for democratic decentralisation of administration is required to empower the people and local government institution," Justice Rabbani added.

Moderating the press conference, Mohasin Ali, member secretary of the national committee of the national convention and coordinator of the Governance Advocacy Forum, said the major purposes of holding the convention are- formation of taskforce comprising of representatives of local government, civil society members and local government experts to draft policies and to submit it to the policy makers; drafting of recommendations for establishing effective self-govern local government and others.

Genders for Development Alliance Coordinator Ranjan Karmakar and Institute of Environmental Development (IED) Executive Director Numan Ahmed Khan were among others present at the press conference.

UN Day today

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the international community to strengthen its efforts to further democratise the UN for a greater voice of developing countries to realise these noble goals for the common good of humanity.

She made the call in a message issued on the occasion of United Nations Day, 2010 to be observed today.

Hasina reaffirmed the unwavering commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as enunciated in the Constitution of Bangladesh.

She said the United Nations Day visits us every year as an occasion to renew our faith in the collective capacity of humankind to create for ourselves a world free from fear and want. The United Nations, founded 65 years ago, continues to embody the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world to live in peace and dignity, in freedom and progress, she added.

Boy murdered in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A minor boy died on being struck on the head with a brick by another in city's Khulshi area on Friday evening.

Police arrested the alleged killer from city's Wireless Gate area at around 11:00am yesterday.

Deceased Mohammad Parvez, 09, is the son of one Shamsul Haque of Nuria Ali Madrasa Lane under Khulshi Police Station and an employee of a scrap-shop.

Police said Shahadat Hossain, 14, son of one Ashraf Ali Hiron of the same area, hit Parvez with a brick when the latter refused an attempt of violation around 6:00pm near the Water Refinery Plant of Railway.

Shahadat left Parvez, who died on the spot, beside a drain. Locals found the body in the morning and informed police.

Police sent the body to Chittagong Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

After arrest, Shahadat, a mason assistant and van-puller, told The Daily Star that he hit Parvez with a brick but did not realise it would kill him.

He said, "I along with Parvez was painting my van. Parvez locked into an altercation with me as he accidentally got some paint on his trousers.

"I washed his trousers and later tried to violate him. When he denied, I struck him with a brick on his head and he fell down. I left the body near a drain and went to work.

"In the morning I found out that Parvez died. I went out driving the van and that is the time police arrested me."

"I was caught twice by police on charges of burglary before," he admitted.

Shamsul Haque filed a murder case with Khulshi Police Station accusing Shahadat.

49 'drug peddlers, addicts' held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police on Friday night arrested 49 suspected drug peddlers and addicts with some drugs in a drive at the slums along rail track in the city.

Over 800 police led by DMP Joint Commissioner Humyun Kabir conducted the two-hour drive simultaneously at different places along the 31-km rail track from Jurain to near Tongi.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Monirul Islam of DB told of the drive at a press briefing held at DB office in the city yesterday.

DC Monir said they recovered 68 litre alcohol, 182 packets of heroine, around eight-kg cannabis, 300 cans of bear and 144 pieces of Yaba.

Police tried to destroy the drug network through the simultaneous drive although the recovery was not huge, he said.

DCs from eight crime zones took part in the drive, Monir said, adding that such drive will be conducted frequently at different areas where drugs are peddled more.

The drug hot spots have been identified, but Monir declined to name them for confidentiality.

CJ asks judicial officials not to bow to pressure

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque yesterday urged the judicial magistrates to follow the constitution and the law in discharging their duties and not to give in to any pressure.

He made the request at a meeting with some 300 judicial officials coming from across the country. Supreme Court Registrar Md Ashrafur Islam at a press briefing at his office told journalists about the discussion in the meeting.

On Friday, the chief justice sat with sub judges. Earlier, he expressed his desire to meet officials of the judiciary to know about

the problems they face while on duty and to maintain a good perception of the judiciary.

He will also sit with officials of lower judiciary in a series of meetings that he planned for every Friday and Saturday until November 12.

Khairul at the meeting said the main target of the judiciary is to establish justice in the country. He also talked about the judicial ethics, Ashrafur said.

He [chief justice] asked the magistrates to reduce the time of judicial process in order to minimise public sufferings and instructed them to deliver verdicts instantly when it is possible.



Bangladesh Commerce Minister Faruque Khan shakes hands with his Indian counterpart Anand Sharma at the Indian Commerce Ministry office in New Delhi yesterday after signing a Memorandum of Understanding to start two border haats. (Story on Page 1)

HYDRO-POWER PROJECT, DAMS Assam CM seeks PM's intervention

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi has written a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, urging him to set up a team of technical experts to examine the safety of proposed hydro-power projects and dams in adjacent northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh.

The letter called upon state-owned National Hydro-electric Power Corporation (NHPC), implementing the 2000MW Lower Subansiri Hydro-electric Project at Gerukamukh on Assam-Arunachal border, to set up the team consisting of internationally acclaimed seismologists and experts on the subject.

The team would examine the technical parameters for the safety and stability of the project, the letter stated.

Gogoi told reporters in Guwahati on Friday that he also put forward a suggestion to consider setting up a steering group to advise the NHPC on flood and erosion control measures in downstream areas.

Allaying widespread concern that his government was silent on the adverse effect of the projects downstream in Assam, Gogoi said, "I will definitely not accept any such project.

"But if they benefit Assam after remedial measures, I will accept them. I will form an expert commission for studying the impact of the projects."

Seeking the PM's personal intervention, Gogoi said the Central Water Commission should immediately start a comprehensive river basin study in the North East.

This would determine the cumulative impact on bio-diversity and the eco-system of the area due to the proposed hydel (hydro-electric) projects, he said.

Legal notice to stop earth filling on Kirtonkhola

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday served a legal notice to the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) to stop earth filling on the Kirtonkhola river within 24 hours, says a press release.

Manzil Murshed served the notice yesterday on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, an environment and human rights organisation.

He served the legal notice after a report was published in a newspaper on October 22 that the Kirtonkhola river is being filled up with earth.

The copy of the legal notice has been sent to the secretary of shipping ministry, chairman of BIWTA, commissioner of BIWTA Metropolitan Police and official of Barisal's BIWTA office and officer-in-charge of Kotwali police station of Barisal.

I feel nostalgic at DU reunion: VC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A grand reunion of the department of management studies of Dhaka University was held at TSC auditorium yesterday.

DU Vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique was the chief guest at the programme chaired by Prof Jamal Uddin Ahmed, the dean of the faculty of business studies.

Prof Arefin said gathering of this kind would help to build bridge between the students of different batches.

"I feel nostalgic whenever I attend any reunion of the university."

Management Sport Club, an association of the former students of the department, arranged the get-together participated by the students from the first to the eleventh batch.

The main purpose of the event was to bond the former and current students together so that they can cooperate from their respective field.

An air of festivity prevailed when about a thousand students met their old friends after long, chatted to each other and took photographs during the daylong programme beginning at 11:30am.

Jesmin Sultana, a BBA graduate from the 10th batch, said it is a great opportunity for them to meet friends and peers.

VC of World University Prof Abdul Mannan Choudhury, also a former teacher of the department, called upon the students to form an association for the ex-students from this reunion. He expressed his joy to see the former students.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the 11th death anniversary of Justice Amin-ur-Rahman Khan, a former law secretary and member of the law commission, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil and quarkhwni will be held at his son's Dhanmondi residence.

Relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to attend the programme.

Brajo Gopal Dutta

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 23rd death anniversary of Brajo Gopal Dutta, a teacher of Feni Government Pilot High School and sports expert, says a press release.

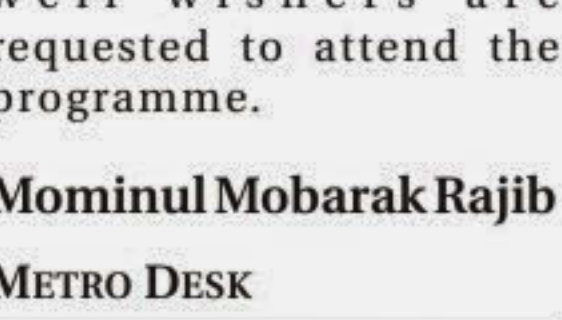
On the occasion, Ritual activities will be held at his residence in Feni today and his annual Shradha will be held later at his son Anup Dutt's residence in Chittagong.

Dutta passed away on the day in 1987 in the city.

Relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to attend the programme.

Mominul Mobarak Rajib

METRO DESK



Today is the first death anniversary of Mominul Mobarak Rajib. Relatives, friends and well wishers are requested to pray for the departed soul.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:25pm today and rises at 6:01am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.9 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundu and lowest 22.2 degrees Celsius at Madaripur.

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	32.1	26.0	76	71
Chittagong	31.5	25.8	81	77
Rajshahi	31.0	24.5	85	87
Khulna	32.0	25.0	83	85
Barisal	33.2	25.4	80	87
Sylhet	33.7	24.2	71	75
Cox's Bazar	32.0	26.5	76	88

DHAKA TODAY

Symposium
United Nations Association of Bangladesh will organise a symposium on the occasion of 'United Nations Day'. Venue: TSC auditorium, Time: 4:30pm.

Meeting
Bangladesh Crop Protection Association will hold a meeting. Venue: Westin Hotel, Time: 8:00pm.

Discussion
Transparency International will arrange a discussion. Venue: Brac Centre Inn, Time: 10:00am.

Dialogue
Bangladesh Protibandhi Kallyan Somity will arrange a dialogue. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 10:00am.

Meeting
Muktijudda & Swadhinata Itiha Gobashona Foundation will arrange a meeting. Venue: National Education Management Academy auditorium, Time: 5:00pm.

Roundtable
Journalism Training & Research Initiative will arrange a roundtable. Venue: TK Bhaban, Karwan Bazar, Time: 10:00am.

Human chain
Bangladesh College-University Teachers will form a human chain. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 4:00pm.

Meeting
Nagorik Sanghati will arrange a meeting. Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity, Time: 3:30pm.

Workshop
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) will hold a workshop. Venue: BGMEA complex, Time: 12:30pm.

Human chain
Ship Breaking Yard Sramik Karmachari Union will form a human chain. Venue: High Court premises, Time: 10:00am.