

Ensure justice for challenged

Demand human rights leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of two human rights organisations yesterday demanded justice on the incidents of violence against physically challenged people across the country.

The leaders called upon the government, law enforcing agencies and citizen's groups to ensure justice for the physically challenged women falling victim to rape by local hoodlums, neighbours and even relatives.

They were speaking at a press conference organised by Disability Rights Watch Group and Jatiya Pratibandhi Forum at Dhaka Reporter's Unity in the city.

Jatiya Pratibandhi Forum Secretary General Jowherul Islam Mamun, Disability Rights Watch Group Convener Quazi Rosy and Nazrana Yasmin Hira, among others, spoke on the occasion.

Some victims of such incidents were present and spoke about their ordeals.

A hearing impaired 24 year old woman died during an abortion as she became pregnant after being raped by her cousin.

But she could not speak out against this violence, said her father, who filed a murder case in this regard at Kapasia Thana.

A ten year-old mentally challenged Jharna (not her real name) was raped by a local of Bandar thana of Narayanganj when he took her to a Baishakhi Mela on May 8 this year. She was rescued the next day from a field, said her father, who also filed a case in this regard at the Bandar thana.

Another mentally challenged Tahmina (not her real name) also fell victim of rape by a local hoodlum at Fatullah thana of Narayanganj on October 18 this year. Tahmina's father said he filed a case but police are yet to take any step in arresting the accused.

A second year student of Bogra Medical College committed suicide on December 11 this year as he was harassed and teased by his friends, classmates and even a teacher as he stammered while speaking.

The leaders demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the accused otherwise, they said, the universal rights of the physically challenged people will not be ensured in the country.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the first reunion of National Defence College by releasing balloons in the sky on NDC premises of Mirpur Cantonment in the city yesterday.

Migrant workers served little

Say experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different government and non-government institutions including brokers and recruiting agencies obtain hard cash from non-organised migrant workers, but they insufficiently show responsibility to the overseas employees, experts said yesterday.

The sector, which now brings some US\$11 billion annually, is the lifeline of the country's economy, yet the successive governments have cared the migrants little, they told a discussion.

Institute of Governance Studies (IGS) of Brac University organised it on "International labour migration: Making migrant workers' welfare central to governance" at Jatri conference room in the city.

"The state has extracted cash money from the non-organised migrants since the last 20 years," said eminent jurist Dr Shahdeen Malik.

Baira (Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies) also cannot deny that the money from this business is used in politics, he said.

"This is the absurdity of the state," said Malik, a Supreme Court lawyer. Nearly 70 lakh Bangladeshis work abroad, but the budget for the expatriates' welfare ministry is only Tk 40 crore, he added.

Putting the sector in discipline requires a major policy shift of the state to ensure migrants' rights, he said.

BNP leader Barrister Mahbubuddin Khokon said the government has always played dual

role regarding money laundering that takes place much often in the sector.

As transparency has not been established, agents, brokers, and others get engaged in frauds and hundreds of crore of taka is laundered abroad, said Khokon, also joint secretary general of BNP.

Israfil Alam MP, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and Employment, said overseas employment has been turned into a 'dumping sector' for mismanagement in the last few years.

A lot of people were sent to Malaysia on tourist visas, he said, adding that a serious inquiry into the agencies that have sent them is important.

Media personality Muhammad Jahangir said the government should consider it a thrust sector and employ adequate personnel to serve the people.

Prof Tasneem Siddiqui, chair of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, said high migration cost and low salaries are the major constraints for the Bangladesh migrants.

Strong negotiations and monitoring of the welfare issues by the missions abroad are imperative, said Siddiqui who chaired the programme.

IGS research associate Harun-Or-Rashid presented a paper at the event. IGS Director Manzoor Chowdhury, Baira Secretary General Ali Haider Hossain; its former president Mosharraf Hossain MP; and Nurul Islam, director of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, also spoke.

Two doctors among 5 killed in road crash

UNB, Naogaon

Five people, including two physicians, were killed and 40 others injured, 10 critically, in a road accident on Naogaon-Rajshahi Highway at Sabaihat in Manda upazila yesterday evening.

Three of the dead are Dr Happy and Dr Hassan Ahmed Rakib of Manda Upazila Health Complex and Mukta of Haragram of Rajshahi.

Police said a Rajshahi-bound BRTC bus from Dhamaihat of the district skidded off road at about 6:00pm and fell into a 30-foot ditch beside the highway, killing four passengers on the spot and injuring 41 others.

On information, police and rescuers from two units of Rajshahi Fire Service rushed in and rescued the injured.

12 injured were rushed to Naogaon Health Complex while 25 others to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital where Mukta died at night.

Mugger held after gunfight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a bullet-hit mugger after a gunfight with his accomplices at Adabar in the city early yesterday.

On information, the law enforcers chased a gang of armed-thugs who gathered at Balur Math to commit mugging, said Rab-2 sources.

The sources added the muggers, during the chase, opened fire on Rab personnel who fired back on the criminals injuring Joni Razbangshi, 20, of Hazaribagh.

Rab recovered a shooter gun from Joni who was admitted to the city's orthopaedic hospital.

45 lakh children at risky works

Says Seep quoting survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 45 lakh working children in Bangladesh are at risk-involving labours, said Social and Economic Enhancement Programme (Seep) yesterday.

Referring to a government survey, Seep officials said the number of child labourers is increasing day by day under the country's present socio-economic condition.

Speaking at a press conference at the National Press Club, Seep Coordinator Md Mahsin Uddin Sumon said the present number of child labourers in Bangladesh is 79 lakh.

Of them, 64 lakh are engaged in various forms of child labour in villages while 15 lakh in cities, he said.

Sumon said they were placing the information in reference to a survey on child labour in the country by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Quoting the survey, he said a total of 45 types of risk-involving labours are present in Bangladesh. Of them, children are engaged in 41 types of labours as one third of the total labourers are children. Of the child labourers, 73.50 percent are boys while 26.50 are girls, he added.

Seep officials said the children engaged in labour are deprived of their basic rights and become victims of various physical and mental tortures.

Future of many child labourers is becoming uncertain as many of them are getting involved in different immoral activities including drug addiction, they added.

Seep leaders demanded adoption of a national policy to reduce the increasing rate of child labourers and ensure their basic rights.

Seep General Secretary Fazlur Haque Chowdhury and Monitoring Officer Rafiqul Islam Barea were present at the press conference.

City house gutted in fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A tin-shed house was gutted in a fire at kusumbagh of the city's Sobujbagh area yesterday.

Fire brigade sources said the fire gutted the two-storey house at about 8:50am and spread fast because of wooden made body of the house.

Four units of the fire brigade rushed to the spot and managed to douse the fire at about 10:30am.

All the rooms of the house was fully burnt though no causality was reported as the tenants managed to go outside of the house.

Total nine families lived in the house.

EC reschedules polls for six municipalities

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Commission declared fresh election schedules for six municipalities, which had been postponed by the High Court verdict, with the polling date for them now set for January 27.

The municipalities include Magura, Jhalkathi, Cox's Bazar, Moheshkali, Chakoria and Taknaf.

As per the new schedule, the last date for submitting nominations is now on December 29, while scrutiny of nomination will be made January 1-2, withdrawal of nomination on January 10, leading up to the polling date on January 27.

Election Commissioner M Sohel Hussain disclosed the new schedule to journalists yesterday at his office in the Election Commission Secretariat.

He said the elections to some 15 municipal-

ities had been postponed by the High Court, but the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court postponed the verdict of the High court following appeals made against the High Court verdict.

The Election Commissioner said appeals can be made for the first time against the acceptance and cancellation of nominations, and the appeal will have to be made within three days of scrutiny of nomination.

Sohul said the candidates will have to provide seven declarations in the nomination paper. If anyone is elected as having given false information, he or she would be removed if the allegations are proved.

Replying to a question, Sohel said election schedules for parliamentary by-elections in Habiganj-1 and Brahmanbaria-3 constituencies will be announced within 2 or 3 days.

SC upholds HC ad interim bail to 5 Jamaat men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld the High Court (HC) orders that granted ad interim bail to five detained Jamaat-e-Islami leaders in five separate cases filed against them on charges of obstructing police from discharging duties.

The leaders are Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid, Naeef-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayedee, Senior Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and its leader Abdul Kader Molla.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice SK Sinha passed 'no order' on five petitions filed by the government against the HC orders.

Barrister Abdur Razzaq, the lawyer for Jamaat leaders, told The Daily Star that the chamber judge of the apex court refused to pass any order on the government petitions and it means the HC orders have been upheld.

The Jamaat leaders, however, will not be released from jail since they were arrested on war crime charges, he added.

Police filed the cases with Uttara, Paltan and Ramna police stations on different dates of June and July this year on charges of obstructing police from discharging duties and vandalising vehicles.

The HC on November 28 granted ad interim bail for six months to the Jamaat leaders.

The government recently filed separate writ petitions with the SC against the HC orders.

Additional Attorney General Murad Reza appeared for the government.

BAS's seminar held

METRO DESK

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) organised two seminars at the auditorium of the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Centre in the city on Sunday.

Of them, one titled "Beyond the Borders of Science" presented by Dr ASB Tariq, associate professor, department of Physics, Rajshahi University and another titled "Meeting with New Champions: Sharing the Experiences of Summer Davos" by Dr Charisma F Chowdhury, department Civil Engineering, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

The seminars, chaired by Prof Dr M Shamsheer Ali, president of Bangladesh Academy of Sciences and moderated by Prof Dr Naiyym Choudhury, secretary of the academy.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia calls on Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping at China's Great Hall in Beijing yesterday.



Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) and ReliSource Technologies Ltd sign a deal at SUST yesterday.

SUST, ReliSource sign deal on hi-tech society

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ReliSource Technologies Ltd and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) have agreed to work for building a hi-tech society, says a press release.

An agreement was signed between the representatives of both the parties to this end yesterday at a programme held on SUST campus.

Under the agreement, both

parties will work for algorithmic development, technology-related critical problem solving, web engineering, embedded device programming and conducting cutting-edge research.

ReliSource Technologies Ltd CEO Wasim Chaudhuri and SUST CSE Department Head Muhammad Zafar Iqbal signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

Dec 26 hartal a bid to save war criminals

Says Islami Oikkyo Jote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Islami Oikkyo Jote (IOJ) yesterday said the December 26 hartal and call by a section of ulemas is a bid to save the war criminals and foil the trial.

IOJ Chairman Misbahur Rahman said Jamaat leaders charged with crimes against humanity in the liberation war.

Rahman was addressing a press conference held at the central office of IOJ at North Mugda Para.

Islami Ain Bastabayan Committee, mainly dominated by the faction of IOJ led by Mufti Fazlul Haq Amini, called the hartal in protest of the national education policy termed it anti-Islamic. Main opposition BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami has supported the hartal.

IOJ will hold a protest rally against the hartal at the city's Muktangan on December 24.

Misbahur Rahman said the education policy has nothing against Islam; the hartal was called just to save the war criminals.

The IOJ chairman in a written statement said Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, co-chairman of the education policy formulation committee, held meetings with the ulemas before finalising the policy.

He said Maulana Mahiuddin Khan, who called the hartal, and his associates were also present in many of those meetings and had appreciated the education policy.

"It is clear to the people that why and for whose interests they are now terming the education policy an anti-Islamic one and calling the hartal," he said.

Manikganj Darbar Sharif Zikir starts tomorrow

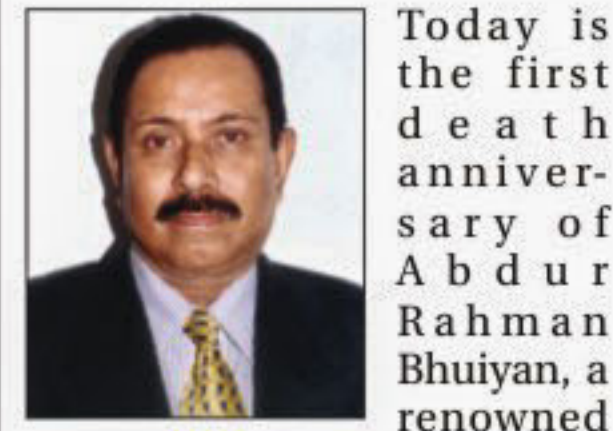
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day long Zikir mahfil will begin tomorrow at Manikganj Darbar Sharif of Siddiknagar.

Around 10 lakhs devotees from different countries will participate in the congregation.

Dr Mohammad Monjurul Islam Chowdhury will conduct the concluding prayers on December 25.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of A b d u r B h u i y a n, a renowned insurance personality.

He was the director of Sadharan Bima Corporation, founder and vice chairman of Padma Life Insurance and teacher of Bangladesh Insurance Academy.

Work unitedly to stop trafficking

Sahara urges both source and destination countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday said human trafficking cannot be combated effectively due to structural weaknesses and ineffectiveness of different quarters.

A section was involved in the crime by cheating workers in the name of sending them abroad, she said.

Sahara told a meeting on "National consultation on draft comprehensive law on human trafficking" at a hotel in the city.

She said both the source and destination countries should work together to prevent

trafficking. Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Shikder chaired the meeting organised by International Organisation for Migration.

Law Commission Chairman Prof M Shah Alam said the law would provide safety to the workers alongside tackling the crime.

Dr Redwanul Haque of Dhaka University presented the draft of the law at the consultation meeting.

Rabab Fatima (RF), regional representative of IOM for South Asia, and Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed, joint secretary to the home ministry, were present at the inaugural session among others.

DHAKA TODAY

Award giving
IUBAT will organise an award giving ceremony. Venue: IUBAT conference hall, Sector-10, Uttara, Time: 10:00am.

Workshop
Forum for Information Dissemination on Agriculture will arrange a workshop. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 10:30am.

Discussion
Democracy Watch will organise a discussion. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 3:00pm.

Workshop
Dhaka University faculty of Pharmacy will hold a workshop. Venue: Centre of Excellence, Dhaka University, Time: 10:00am.

Meeting
Bangladesh Nationalist Socio-Cultural Organisation will hold a meeting. Venue: Bhasani Auditorium, Naya Paltan, Time: 3:00pm.