

Youth crushed under city train wheels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A youth was crushed under the wheels of a train on Tejgaon level crossing in the city Thursday night.

Sabbir Al Reza Mithun, 25, of Shekhertek in the city's Adabar, was severed during crossing the rail gate around 8:00pm.

He was returning home after attending a job interview at Gulshan. Mithun graduated recently from Khulna University on computerscience.

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Rights violation still unabated: Odhikar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights violation including extra-judicial killing, torture, and cruel treatment in the custody of law-enforcement agencies and violence against women and children continue unabated in Bangladesh.

Rights organisation Odhikar revealed it Thursday in its three-yearly mid-term assessment and report on the universal periodic review "Bangladesh from February 2009 to February 2011".

Odhikar cites several reasons behind the violation including lack of political will, denial by the government authorities, and corruption and impunity.

The government within three weeks into assuming office in January 2009 sent a delegation led by Foreign Minister Dipu Moni to Geneva to the first Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Bangladesh at UN Human Right Council, says Odhikar.

The foreign minister made a series of pledges to the Human Rights Council there. Bangladesh will have to appear with its progress report at the end of the government's tenure, as there is a review of the human rights records of all the 192 UN member states in every four years.

According to Odhikar statistics, 279 accounts of extra-judicial killings took place from February 04, 2009 to February 03 this year. Independent and impartial investigations and effective measures were not taken to prosecute persons found responsible for such deaths.

From February 04, 2009 to February 03 this year, 147 people were allegedly tortured and among them 40 died in custody, Odhikar report says.



A concert 'Tara Bhora Raatey' on old songs organised by The Daily Star at Jatiya Natyashala in Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday as part of the celebrations to commemorate the daily's 20th anniversary.

PHOTO: STAR

Most pharma companies tempt doctors with 'gifts'

Drug admin 'inactive' to check such practices

UNB, Dhaka

With a view to popularising their brands, most of the pharmaceutical companies in the country allegedly practice unethical drug promotion alluring doctors with free samples and gifts to prescribe their medicines.

To stop such unethical promotion of drugs, there was no effective implementation of the Drugs (Control) Ordinance, 1982 that regulates manufacture, import, distribution and sale of drugs in Bangladesh.

The Drug Administration, which regulates manufacture, import and quality control of drugs in the country, is also inactive to put a stop to such unethical practices.

Pharmaceutical companies practice drug promotion to boost sales and earn more profit, although it is clearly unethical, Prof Dr M Sharfuddin Ahmed, secretary general of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), told the news agency.

Sharfuddin, also chairman of the Eye Department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), said Bangladeshi pharmaceutical companies produce standard medicines but all companies cannot produce quality products.

According to the industry sources, the pharmaceutical companies allocate huge sums in their annual budget for gifts to be distributed among the medical practitioners. A number of representatives of pharmaceutical companies, both local and multinational, said they often bribe doctors to promote their particular drugs.

M Shahin Shah, former medical representative of a pharmaceutical company, said the pharmaceutical companies offer attractive gifts to the doctor on various occasions. "The pharmaceutical companies offer doctors many things - from pens to cash money - as

part of their promotional activities. Sometimes they even undertake decoration of the doctors and also offer sarees for doctors' wives," he said.

Narrating his own experience, Shahin said that during his service as a medical representative, he offered crystal flower vase to a doctor to prescribe his company's drugs. Instantly, the doctor prescribed the tablet for a patient without trying to know its quality.

He said that many companies give Tk 5,000-10,000 to popular and familiar doctors per month in rural areas to promote their drugs. This rate is reportedly higher in

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urban areas.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) Deputy Director Farida Yeasmin, who is working for strengthening the government regulatory bodies like Drug Administration, stressed full implementation of the Drug Act as well as effective inspection and monitoring on manufacturing, marketing and use of drugs.

She suggested the government to recruit more manpower in the Drug Administration to make it more effective as well as formulate 'Code of Marketing' to check such unethical practice to save the lives of people.

TANGRATILA GAS BLOWOUTS

Dhaka to claim Tk 764cr from Niko

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will claim Tk 764 crore as compensation from Canadian company Niko Plc at an arbitration tribunal constituted to settle the dispute over two gas blowouts at Tangratila in Sunamganj in 2005.

Bangladeshi panel lawyer Advocate Tawfiq Newaz will fly to Geneva today to fix the procedural modules of compensation issue at the tribunal that meets soon, a senior official of Petrobangla told the news agency.

Ensure just price of potatoes

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view-exchange meeting yesterday urged the government to take effective measures to preserve potato and ensure just price for potato growers.

The meeting was jointly organised by Nagorik Sanghati, Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods (CSRL) and Karmojibi Nari at Jatiya Press Club in the city. Karmojibi Nari President Shirin Akter chaired the event.

Israfil Alam, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on labour and employment ministry, said capacity of cold storages has to be increased.

BARI Director Dr Harun-or-Rashid, Cold Storage Owners' Association President Jasim Uddin and Nagorik Sanghati General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Sharif also spoke.

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