

Digital Bangladesh thru' RTI implementation

Says minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would establish digital Bangladesh by 2021 through implementation of the Right to Information Act (RTI), the information minister told a roundtable yesterday.

Abul Kalam Azad, minister for Information and Cultural Affairs, said, "Formulation of the law manifests the government's emphasis on people's right to get information, and its enactment was followed by the establishment of a functioning independent commission".

Azad was addressing the roundtable arranged by Right to Information Forum at the city's Brac Centre Inn, marking the International Right to Know Day yesterday.

The programme began with the presentation a survey report on the status of RTI act implementation. The study jointly conducted by the Institute of Informatics and Development and D.Net involved over 216 institutions including 108 government ones.

More than 60 percent of the people surveyed said the existing Information Commission is not strong enough to function independently while more than 50 percent even do not know the law is being implemented.

About 60 percent people who were denied

information by different institutions, mainly governmental, said they did not get the information, as the authority does not have the information stored.

NGO activists attending the programme from across the country complained that the majority of the government officials even does not know about the law. "The first step required to implement the law is to make government officials aware about it", said Nijera Kari coordinator Khushi Kabir. She added, "It is the government employees who harass information seekers the most".

Chief Information Commissioner Muhammad Zamir said unwillingness of NGO is holding back the expected implementation of the law. He mentioned that out of about 3,000 NGOs, only 514 have so far appointed designated officer although each of them is required, by the law, to make the appointment in six months after the law was formulated in 2009.

He claimed about 8,500 government offices have already appointed designated officer who would deliver information under the law.

Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam moderated the roundtable attended by Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman and Information Commissioner Abu Taher, among others.



Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad addresses a discussion organised by Right to Information Forum in the city's Brac Centre Inn yesterday marking International Right to Know Day. On his right are Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman, Nijera Kori Coordinator Khushi Kabir, Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam and Chief Information Commissioner Muhammad Zamir.

PHOTO: STAR

Students protest torture in schools

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over hundreds of students of Nalanda, an innovative school of cultural organisation Chhayanaut for children, yesterday strongly protested torture on students by teachers at educational institutions.

They demanded establishing children-friendly atmosphere in all schools across the country.

They placed the demands at a human chain in front of the city's Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhaban following a recent incident of stu-

dent torture at Motijheel Ideal School and College.

Students were seen standing in row with placards that displayed

Students of Nalanda demand establishing children-friendly atmosphere in all schools

different slogans like "we want torture-free educational institutions," "We come to schools to learn, not to be tortured".

"We demand such an environment where we can enjoy the learning process. We do not need such teachers who misbehave or torture

the students," said Anindya Nahar Habib, a student of class nine.

Another student, Al Muntasir Srijon, said, "I am really afraid of

after news reports of student torture at different schools. I always think one day I may be a victim of such torture."

A number of teachers of the school joined the human chain.

The Daily Star tried to reach the principal of Motijheel Ideal School and College for comment but found her cell phone switched off.

However, the education ministry in a handout issued on Tuesday said that the school authorities temporarily suspended teacher Reazul Karim who has punished a class-VII student recently.

ATTENDANCE FINE

DU gives in to students' protests

PALASH RAHMAN

In the face of the students' protest programmes for the last 16 days, Dhaka University (DU) authorities are finally going to reconsider the amount of fine to impose on students failing to achieve 75 percent class attendance.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique yesterday said the Academic Council, comprised of the faculty deans, department chairpersons and the VC, would soon reconsider the amount bearing in mind the students' economic condition.

However, he did not disclose what the amount could be.

On August 7, the council decided that students must have 75 percent attendance after each six-month-long semester to give the final exam otherwise a Tk 5,000 fine would be slapped on them. Formally it was Tk 1,000.

Those having less than 60 percent would be declared non-collegiate and barred from attending the final exam.

Afterwards, several hundred students of different departments under the banner "General students of Dhaka University" began holding agitation programmes, rallies and processions, calling to revoke the "autocratic decision".

At one point, the agitating students threatened to hold fast-unto-death programmes.

Attending regular classes is quite hard for hundreds of DU students who have to

work part-time in places like shopping malls, coaching centers and call centres to support themselves, they said.

One student, Rezaul Karim, of Department of International Relations, said "It is impossible for me to have 75 percent attendance. I came from a lower-middle-class family and it is not possible for my family to bear my education expenses.

"I must work part-time." Another student said, "What will happen if someone falls sick or has an accident? This decision would destroy the normal flow of our education."

Some students alleged that teachers themselves sometimes do not take regular classes. The DU authority should ensure quality education and a good environment in the classrooms before taking such decisions, they said.

A student in his third year at mass communication and journalism department, seeking anonymity, said, "I intentionally skip some classes only because there are some teachers who fail to make the lessons easily understandable.

"There are even some who say things to torture the students mentally. As a student at university level, none should force me to attend classes through fear of fines."

Students should be included in the academic council to voice their problems and concerns in both academic and non-academic activities concerning the university's major decisions to create a democratic atmosphere, they said.

Use nat'l resources for people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee for Protecting Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power, and Ports, yesterday urged the government to use the national resources for the interest of the people of Bangladesh.

He said if the government tries to work for the imperialists instead of working for the people, the people will resist.

Prof Anu was addressing a rally organised by the committee at Laldighi Maidan in the port city yesterday, upon completion of its three-day Dhaka-Chittagong road march, which was launched September 26.

Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, Prof MM Akash, and Abu Jafar spoke at the rally with Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam in the chair.

Channel i to celebrate its 12 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Channel i, a satellite television channel in Bangladesh, has chalked out various programmes to celebrate its 12th anniversary on October 1.

On the occasion, a cultural fair would be held at its office premises in the city's Tejgaon apart from a number of special programmes to be broadcasted on the channel.

"Our biggest achievement in the last twelve years is the fact that we have given the general people a platform to voice their opinions," said Shykh Siraj, news director of Channel i, at a press conference held in its city office yesterday.

"We want to share this achievement with everyone else in the media industry," he added.

Channel i Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar also spoke at the press briefing.

The channel began its transmissions on October 1, 1999.



Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports, speaks at a rally organised by the committee at Laldighi Maidan in the port city of Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

TORTURE OF HOUSEWIFE Take action against arbitrators

HC asks police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the police authorities to take appropriate action against the persons responsible for torturing a housewife in an arbitration at Golachipa Upazila in Patuakhali after investigating the incident immediately.

A vacation bench of HC issued the suo moto rule following a report published in a Bangla national daily on the incident yesterday.

The housewife, a mother of two children, of Kalyankolapur of Golachipa, was beaten with shoes in the arbitration on Saturday for her alleged extra-marital affairs with a young man of the same village, according to the newspaper report.

Md Kaiyum Khan, general secretary of ruling Awami League of Kolagachia union of Golachipa, led the arbitration, which also fined her with Tk 10,000, said the report, adding that the young man was also beaten with shoes and fined Tk 15,000.

Kolagachia Union Parishad member Md Hashem Hawlader, police constable of Kolagachia Police Box Md Siddique, and villager Rezaul Haque Mollah alias Hot Mollah, were among other arbitrators, according to the report.

The HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Nazrul Islam Talukder also asked SP of Patuakhali and OC of Golachipa Police Station to submit a report to this court immediately after complying with the directive.

Advocate Fauzia Karim Firoze, president of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association, placed the newspaper report before the HC bench.

Poor deprived of proper treatment at govt hospitals

Says HR body boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The poor are not getting required treatment facilities in the government hospitals, as the allotted funds are not spent properly and being gobbled up by some corrupt people, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman said yesterday.

He shared his observation with journalists after visiting Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital yesterday. To his utter disappointment, Prof Mizanur said such mismanagement and dirty atmosphere in a government medical college hospital is just unwanted and unthinkable.

The ministry concerned as well as the hospital authority should see why the patients are deprived of proper treatment, he said. Amid financial constraint the government allocates funds for the purpose, which should be spent properly, he added.

The poor only have to turn out to the government hospitals while the well-off people can easily manage at private hospitals, said the NHRC chief, who was informed of keeping patients on floors when a number of beds were vacant. He also observed supply of poor quality food and medicine in several wards.

Prof Mizanur also visited the Sylhet Government Pilot Girls High School and the government orphanage.

প্রশ্রম্বরের মত কানাডার চরে-চরেতে বিশ্বব্যাপী হাইজিং ফেয়ার টুরেন্টো ২০১১

Venue: Major League Sports Plex 641 Denforth Road, Toronto, M1K1G1

আপনার স্বপ্নের আদাম খুঁজে নিন বিশ্বব্যাপী ০১, ০২, ০৩ অক্টোবর ২০১১

এই ফেয়ারে থাকবে বাংলাদেশের ৫০টি শীর্ষস্থানীয় হাইজিং কোম্পানী। বিশ্বব্যাপী ফেয়ার থেকে আপনি বেছে নিল আপনার পছন্দের প্রুট, স্যুটি ও কমার্শিয়াল পেম্প। বিশ্বব্যাপী ফেয়ার উপলক্ষে প্রতিটি স্টলে থাকবে বিশেষ ছাড়।

উদ্বোধনী অধিবেশনে

প্রধান অতিথি থাকবেন : জনাব আব্দুল মান্নান খান, এমপি
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রিহাব সভাপতি : জনাব নসরুল হামিদ, এমপি।

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স্বাগতিক সাদর আমন্ত্রণ...

সাধারণ সম্পাদক : জনাব মুন্নাদ ইকবাল চৌধুরী।

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