

Launch social movement against drugs: Shahara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Shahara Khatun yesterday urged people living in border areas to launch a social movement to prevent drug smuggling into the country.

"It's not enough if we only say no to drugs. We have to launch a social movement against drug if we want to save our children and youths," she said.

The home minister was talking to reporters after inaugurating a seized drug destruction function at Detective Branch of Police (DB) headquarters in the city.

In the function, DB Police destroyed 20,000 bottles of Phensidyl and the same amount of Yaba tablets seized in the first three months of this year. DB officials said the seized drug would be worth around Tk 2 corers.

Replying to a question about extortion in transport sector, she said the government had been taking initiatives to stop extortion in the sector since they took power.

"If anybody is found involved in collecting extortions, they will be punished like the past. In case of specific allegations, the government will do so in the future," she said.

State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khandakar and DMP Commissioner Benazir Ahmed were present at the function.

568 more foreign friends to be awarded

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said the government will award more foreign friends this year for their outstanding contribution to the War of Liberation in 1971.

Addressing a press conference at the ministry after the 20th meeting of the national committee on awarding foreign friends, she said the committee so far prepared a list of 568 and decided to award them in phases.

"We have first awarded former Prime Minister of India late Indira Gandhi posthumously on July 25, 2011 and in the second phase awarded another 73 individuals and international organisations on March 27 last," Dipu Moni said.

"We consider the list of 568 is not a complete one, more names may be included as we continue finding foreign friends. It will be a continuous process to search our foreign friends to award them," she said.

She said in the second phase of the award distribution held on March 27, the government invited a total of 110 individuals and international organisations. Of the invitees, 20 individuals directly received the award and 53 sent their representatives to receive the awards.

The recipients, who will not be able to come to Bangladesh to receive the award, will get their award in their respective countries through the Bangladesh mission, the foreign minister informed.

BDR mutiny convict dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A convict in BDR mutiny case died yesterday due to illness at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).


The deceased Joynal Abedin, 51, was a Lance Nayek of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) (now Border Guard Bangladesh).

Authorities of Dhaka Central Jail rushed Joynal to DMCH as he fell sick. The on-duty doctor of the hospital declared him dead at around 5:00am.

Lt Col Kazi Aniruddha said Joynal, who was a member of Rifles Security Unit at Pilkhana headquarters, was convicted in a mutiny case.

Chwakkabazar Police Station Sub-Inspector Bazlur Rashid said the deceased was hailing from Sirajganj.

The jail authorities filed an unnatural death case with the police station.



WEATHER TODAY

Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind with hail is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise by 1-3 degrees Celsius and night temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:18pm today and rises at 5:42am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Khulna and Jessore and lowest 16.7 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	32.4	20.2	69	91
Chittagong	30.2	18.7	73	81
Rajshahi	32.6	18.7	87	92
Rangpur	26.2	19.2	76	76
Khulna	33.8	22.0	83	80
Barisal	32.5	21.2	76	68



PHOTO: GEORGE RONY

The Christian community gathers in front of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in the capital yesterday to celebrate Easter Sunday.

DHAKA METRO RAIL

Involve experts on traffic system

Suggests ex-chief engineer of Kolkata Metro

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief engineer of Kolkata Metro Ashok Sengupta suggested the government involvement of a group of selected persons who have clear idea about the Dhaka's roads and its traffic situation for establishment of metro rail in Dhaka city.

"Selecting people is very important. This particular group of people will not only have engineering degrees but enough experiences. They will prepare a comprehensive report on how metro rail will be constructed," Ashok told a seminar at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital on Saturday.

Explaining numerous hurdles during construction of Kolkata Metro, the India's first underground railway, he said all the related government agencies should be engaged while the people should be mentally prepared to face difficulties in daily life when construction would begin. Otherwise, deep troubles would come, he warned.

"You must give enough advertisement to the media highlighting good sides of metro rail and

the possible sufferings as construction of metro rail would largely hamper the capital's traffic movement," he said, adding the implementing agency must be prepared to face public anger and widespread protest during the construction.

He said the World Bank strongly had opposed them while Indian central government had asked to stop construction amid public anger and sufferings in Kolkata. "You will face similar situation. So, prepared for that," Ashok told the seminar, attended by several dozens of civil engineers.

He also suggested involving a senior influential minister. "The commanding authority of this person would help overcome a difficult situation," he added.

Ashok, who was born in Barisal and studied at Barisal Zila School, strongly suggested involving experienced lawyers by forming an efficient legal cell to deal with writs against metro rail construction. "We had been able to control traffic as we had included some police officers."

Giving an example of how they arranged accommodation for workers on the army's land,

Ashok said, "You can't do anything overnight. You need cooperation of all in the society."

He said an underground metro railway is also possible in Dhaka, although it is costly, time consuming and cause more difficulties.

Comparing Kolkata and Delhi metro rail, he said construction of elevated metro rail is easy but destroyed the aesthetic beauty of Delhi.

His suggestions came when Bangladesh is trying to construct first metro rail system from Uttara Third Phase to Motijheel with Japanese fund. The project is being delayed due to frequent changes of route and lack of coordination among different government agencies.

Speaking as the chief guest at the seminar, Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury said the proposed metro rail route will run through TSC, Karzon Hall and High Court Building. "Although there is no complaint, we should take aesthetic value in our account," he said.

AL to observe Mujibnagar Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) will observe the historic Mujibnagar Day on April 17 through large scale programmes commemorating the formation of the provisional government of Bangladesh during the War of Liberation in 1971.

A high-level meeting of the ruling party will take place at its president's political office in Dhanmondi at 5:00pm today to chalk out the programme details.

AL Presidium Member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, also coordinator of the Mujibnagar Day Observance Committee, will chair the meeting.

"We will observe the day in a befitting manner as the day is related with the country's independence," AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif told The Daily Star.

He also said the country's maritime victory against Myanmar has added a new dimension in the observance of the day this year.

33RD BCS EXAMS

1.84 lakh to vie for 4,206 posts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 1.84 lakh candidates are going to sit for the upcoming 33rd Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination under Public Service Commission (PSC).

The PSC finalised the number of eligible candidates yesterday after the last date of submitting application ended at 11:59pm on Saturday.

This year the commission received a record number of applications. The number of candidates for 32nd BCS, which was special one, was 24,000 while 1.63 lakh applied for 31st BCS.

The commission, however, decided not to extend time to apply for the examination as it had earlier cautioned the candidates not to apply on the last date, fearing pressure on the server, said the PSC Controller of Examinations AYM Nesar Uddin.

The PSC this year, for the first time, launched online registration system for the BCS examinees. The date for application and paying registration fee began on March 8.

However, some of the candidates alleged that they could not log on to the

PSC's website and could not submit registration fee through the state-owned mobile phone operator Teletalk for the last couple of days.

Some even said they did not receive the confirmation messages from Teletalk.

Nesar said there might be a few candidates who faced the difficulties because of applying on the last date. But, he said those who applied before the stipulated time and received the confirmation message from Teletalk will be eligible candidates.

The 33rd BCS aims at filling up 4,206 vacant government posts. This time, under the general category, 300 will be recruited for BCS (administration), 89 for police, 69 for tax, 16 for foreign affairs and 566 for general cadres.

The government eyes recruitment of 2,905 under professional/technical cadres including 2,572 doctors.

Apart from these, 607 people will be appointed as teachers under BCS (education) and 112 for the teachers' training college.

The preliminary examination is likely to be held at the end of May, said the sources in the PSC.

BPJA BUILDING

Row over hanging billboard: One arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of a freedom fighter locked into a scuffle with photojournalists yesterday over hanging a billboard on the rooftop of a building at Paltan in the capital.

Police arrested late freedom fighter KM Alauddin's son Pranta, a medical student, following filing of a case with Paltan Police Station in this regard.

Pranta, along with his mother Firoza Haque Bithi and relatives, tried to hang a billboard on the rooftop of a building where his mother owns two floors while Bangladesh Photojournalists Association (BPJA) owns the ground floor, said police.

However, BPJA President Shafi Uddin Ahmed Bitu immediately informed the matter to police who stopped hanging of the billboard in the evening.

Later, Bitu filed a case accusing several people, including Pranta, for beating them up, snatching cameras and damaging their motorbikes, police said. The police were deployed in front of the building to avoid further untoward incident.

Contacted, Bitu said their office was located on the ground floor of the building for more than 27 years while Firoza said they had been living on the two floors since 2006.

Bitu said they tried to stop them from hanging the billboard as the building was old one and might not bear the load of the billboard.

Rajshahi people for gas, power supply

Threaten to stop supply of cereal, corns

RU CORRESPONDENT

People from all walks of life in Rajshahi yesterday demanded immediate pipeline gas supply and uninterrupted electricity supply to the district.

Under the banner 'Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad', around a thousand people, including socio-cultural and political activists, placed the demands at a human chain programme at Saheb Bazar zero point intersection in Rajshahi city.

They also staged a demonstration and blocked roads in the area for an hour and half to press home their demands.

Speakers at the programme alleged that the district had been experiencing 8-12 hours of load shedding every day, causing immense sufferings to its people, especially farmers, students and officials.

They also said, despite Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's assurance of ensuring pipeline gas supply to the Rajshahi city by January this year, they are yet to get it.

They threatened of not tolerating any superficial assurance by the authorities by setting up pipelines only but not supplying gas through them.

They declared State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Muhammad Enamul Huq and Energy Adviser to the PM Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury unwanted in Rajshahi for failing to ensure the gas supply.

The speakers demanded immediate pipeline gas supply to the district's industrial units and residences and said a memorandum in this regard will be submitted to the PM and the state minister for power on April 12.

They also threatened of tougher agitation programme, including demonstrations and strike in the city, and stopping the local cereal and corns supply to the country, if their demands are not met.

Rajshahi Rakkha Sangram Parishad President Liakat Ali and General Secretary Jamat Khan, Awami League Rajshahi district unit Joint Secretary Asaduzzaman Asad, BNP Rajshahi city unit Vice-President Alahi Bux Mandal, Jatiya Party Rajshahi city unit General Secretary Zoha Sarkar, Jasod Rajshahi city unit General Secretary Abdullah Al Masud Shibli, National Awami Party Rajshahi district unit General Secretary Mustafizur Rahman Khan Alam, among others, addressed the programme.



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