

Be more stringent on hartal

Nasim suggests Shahara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former home minister Mohammad Nasim suggested Home Minister Shahara Khatun to become more stringent on the opposition so that they could not create anarchy and lead vandalism in the name of hartal.

"They could not be prevented from creating anarchy through existing system. I ask the home minister not to give them (BNP) any room. They should be handled strictly," said Nasim.

He was addressing a discussion on "Stop eviction of hawkers without rehabilitation and protesting vandalism, arson and terrorism in the name of unnecessary hartal" organised by Bangladesh Hawkers Federation at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

He claimed that Awami League (AL) never called hartal on examination date.

Nasim blamed the persons who called hartal responsible for disappearance of BNP leader Ilias Ali.

MA Kashem, president of the federation, chaired the event.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Monnujan Sufian and Dhaka City AL General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, among others, addressed the programme.

Harrowing tale of a mentally challenged girl

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

All she remembered were images of a cramped and filthy tin-shed room where men came and went but none gave any heed to her pleas to be taken home.

When she refused to sleep with strangers, she was severely beaten and degraded and her cries for mercy went unanswered though there were many women and girls all around.

The harrowing tale of this 17-year-old mentally challenged girl came to light at Ward 310 of Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she has been under treatment since April 4.

The numerous cuts, bruises and swollen body parts are a testament to the torture she went through at a Jamalpur brothel where she was forced into prostitution.

With great difficulty, the girl

gave this correspondent a recollection of her ordeals which began on January 10.

That day she had left her Dhamrai residence in Dhaka with a married man, Shahjahan, a rickshaw-van driver of her neighbouring Kashipur village.

Alluring her with promises of making her his second wife, Shahjahan took her to a house in Savar Nabinagar where he left her with a woman for the night after taking her jewellery for, what he said was, safekeeping.

Next morning the woman introduced the girl to a youth. The youth assured of taking her to Shahjahan in Dhaka city but instead handed her over to another woman at the Jamalpur brothel.

For the next two months she was beaten regularly and the woman controlled who she could see, where she could go and what and when

she could eat.

Despite repeated attempts, the girl could not get hold of a cellphone to call her uncle, the only person's number she had in memory.

All she could do was pray day and night.

Her prayers were answered when her captors found her physical condition failing and put her on a Dhaka-bound bus.

The staff at Mohakhali Bus Terminal in the capital found her in critical condition inside a bus which arrived from Jamalpur on March 31.

She was at last reunited with her mother after the staff called up the uncle on the number she gave.

Back home, her mother believes Shahjahan destroyed their lives.

Her husband, an employee of T&T at Dhaka, was murdered in 1996 and the body was found in Amin Bazar. Her elder daughter has been divorced with a child and lives

with her alongside her 22-year-old drug addict son.

The only source of income is her husband's pension and the assistance she gets from relatives from time to time.

Now the pressure is on her to provide her daughter's medical expenses as doctors suggested that it would take time for the girl to fully recover.

She, however, does not know how her daughter would be relieved of the mental scars.

The mother had filed a General Diary with Dhamrai Police Station when she found her daughter missing but police are still to follow up on their investigation.

Her only hope now is that her daughter would be served justice through a proper investigation into the crime and punishment to the people responsible.



Tahsina Rushdir Luna, wife of missing BNP leader M Ilias Ali, along with her children speaks at a press conference at her residence in the capital yesterday. (Story on Page-1)

PHOTO: STAR

AUW board of trustees meeting tomorrow

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Asian University for Women (AUW) is going to organise its second board of trustees meeting at a local hotel in Dhaka at 7:00pm tomorrow.

Indian top most industrialist Kiran Mazumdar Shaw who is also a member of the board of trustees arrives here today to attend the meeting as special guest.

The AUW board of trustees will also pay a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who is the patron of the university.

Opposition chooses path of anarchy: AG

BSS, Dhaka

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday said the BNP-led opposition has chosen the path of anarchy and indiscipline in its bid to pave the way for others to come to power through unconstitutional means.

"The programmes which will create obstruction to democracy will be resisted," he said while speaking at a gathering of law practitioners at the South Hall of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association in the capital.

Sammilito Ainjibi Samannoya Parishad organised the gathering in protest against the opposition's "conspiracy and anarchy" in the country with vice-president of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association KM Saifuddin Ahmed was in the chair.

Advocate Md Azhar Ullah Bhuiyan, a member of the Sammilito Ainjibi Samannoya Parishad, conducted the rally.

Speaking at the rally, Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association general

secretary Mamta Uddin Ahmed Mehdi said being envious of the successes of the government, the opposition has been enforcing repeated hartals without any issue.

Senior lawyer and Awami League presidium member Advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun termed the opposition's hartal illogical and said, "We have not called hartal even after killing of our leader Ivy Rahman in grenade attack."

He said in reality, the opposition's intention for calling hartal was not to rescue Ilias Ali, rather it was aimed at obstructing the Zia Orphanage Trust Corruption Case against Khaleda Zia, money laundering cases against two of her sons and the trial of the war criminals for their heinous crimes committed against humanity in 1971.

Vice-president of Bangladesh Bar Council Advocate Abdul Baset Mazumder said, "Words like missing, fleeing and wilful self-disappearance are the creation of BNP. Which one Ilias

Ali has chosen nobody knows. We don't know even where BNP leaders Haris Chowdhury, Tarek and Coco have gone for hideouts."

On the other hand, Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum brought out a small procession and held a rally on the premises of the Supreme Court in favour of the hartal.

Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association president Zoinul Abedin, Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum President Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia, secretary general Barrister Mahbub Uddin Khokon and Advocate Netai Roy Chowdhury also spoke at the rally.

There were normal judicial functions in all the sections of the Supreme Court and the Appellate Division. Unlike the other working days, the presence of lawyers and clients was thin in the Supreme Court today due to hartal. However, the presence of officers and employees in all the sections of the Supreme Court was normal.

SC clears way to hold bar council polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has paved the way for holding elections to Bangladesh Bar Council, the licensing authority for allowing legal practice to lawyers, on May 28.

Chamber judge of the Appellate Division of SC yesterday halted a High Court order that earlier stayed the process for holding the bar council elections, with a direction to correct its voters' lists 15 days before the date of polling.

Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order following a writ petition filed by the bar council authorities on April 29 seeking stay on the HC order.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar to hold the council elections on May 28 to executive 14 posts as per the schedule following the SC chamber judge's order.

In response to another writ petition, the HC on April 26 stayed process for holding the scheduled elections for four weeks.

Four SC lawyers, including Mohammad Saleh Uddin, jointly filed the writ petition seeking a stay order from the HC on holding the elections, saying that the voter's list of the bar council is "faulty."

The HC on April 26 also issued a rule upon the bar council chairman, vice chairman and secretary to explain in four weeks why the election with "faulty" voter list should not be declared illegal.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman appeared for the bar council authorities, while Advocate AJ Mohammad Ali stood for the writ petitioner.

Int'l cultural confce begins May 9

BSS, Dhaka

A three-day international conference on 'cultural diversity Ministerial Forum of the Asia-Pacific Region-2012' will begin here on May 9, said Information and Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad on Sunday.

The conference which would be held jointly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) would uphold the positive image of the country, Azad said while he was speaking a press conference at the Press Information Department (PID).

The government has already invited the cultural ministers, cultural personalities and the higher officials of 43 countries of Asia and Pacific region to participate in the conference, he said. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the conference at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Unesco Director-General Irina Bokova will attend at the conference as 'Guest of Honor'.

The conference will comprise of six sessions related to different aspects of cultural diversity and it will conclude on May 11 with 'Dhaka Declaration', he added.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Promod Mankin, Cultural Secretary Suraya Begum, Principle Information Officer (PIO) Harun-Ar-Rashid, Additional Secretary of the cultural ministry Shyam Sundar Sikder and cultural personality Ramendu Majumder were present at the press conference.

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BREAKING: Khaleda gives govt four more days to find out BNP leader Ilias Ali, threatens to go for tougher programme if govt fails to trace him. thedailystar.net

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