

RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT Implementation requires increased demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Right to Information (RTI) Act's implementation faces a setback unless people actually demand information to improve livelihoods, observed speakers at a seminar yesterday.

Lack of awareness and an age-old culture that refuses to disseminate information mainly hamper the act's implementation, they said, urging civil society organisations to make people understand the necessity of information.

RTI Forum, a network of several civil society organisations, organised the seminar, "People's participation in realising right to information", in the capital's Bangladesh Shishu Academy marking Right to Know Day today.

Institute of Informatics and Development Chief Executive Syeed Ahmed said ongoing campaigns prioritised ensuring transparency but the issue of improving lives through infor-

mation was overlooked.

"We don't want to see this (RTI Act) as just an act, we want its implementation," said Nijera Kori Executive Director Khushi Kabir.

She underscored the need to change the mindset of officials concerned as they still think that their power and status would go away once they provide information.

Information Commissioner Prof Sadeka Halim said the act's implementation was a challenge as many Bangladeshis were illiterate and only 0.4 percent had internet access.

Shaheen Anam, convener of RTI Forum and executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, urged NGOs to submit names of their designated officers to the Information Commission.

Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman presided over the seminar.

Astronomy festival begins Oct 1

METRO DESK

An astronomy festival featuring a photography exhibition, painting competition, and workshop is going to begin in the capital on October 1.

The events in the Sputnik Festival 2012 will take place over the next three months. It marks the 55th anniversary of first man-made satellite Sputnik's launching in Earth's orbit.

The festival will begin with the 10-day photography exhibition, "Space Exploration", on October 1, to be held at Russian Centre of Science and Culture in Dhaka.

Bangladesh Astronomical Association and Cultural Department of Russian Embassy will jointly host it.

The painting competition "Man in the Space" will be held on October 4. The astronomy workshop will begin the same day.

One session will take place each Thursday from October 4 till December 13, when the workshop will close with a certificate giving ceremony.

ASSAULT ON BNP CHIEF WHIP Court dismisses Zainul's appeal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday dismissed an appeal filed by Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque challenging the legality of a lower court order that had dismissed an attempted murder case.

Judge Md Zahirul Haque of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order against Zainul's appeal which challenged the order that dismissed his case filed against 25 policemen.

The accused include the then additional deputy commissioner (ADC) Harun-or-Rashid and assistant commissioner (AC) of Mohammadpur zone Biplob Sarker.

BNP lawmaker Ashraf Uddin Nizan, on behalf of Zainul, filed the appeal with the court on September 16.

On July 10 last year, Nizan filed the attempted murder case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka accusing 25 policemen of assaulting Zainul Abdin Farroque four days earlier.

A total of 22 lawmakers led by Farroque brought out a procession on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital around 7:50am on the first day of the opposition-sponsored 48-hour hartal on July 6.

But two police officers along with their teams in a pre-planned way stopped them and hurled abuse at them. They also beat up the BNP leader leaving him seriously injured, says the case statement.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Hasibul Haque, on September 3, dismissed the case as a probe report said the incident took place after Zainul behaved arrogantly while his accomplices provoked the law enforcers.

So police acted accordingly to bring the situation under control, it added.

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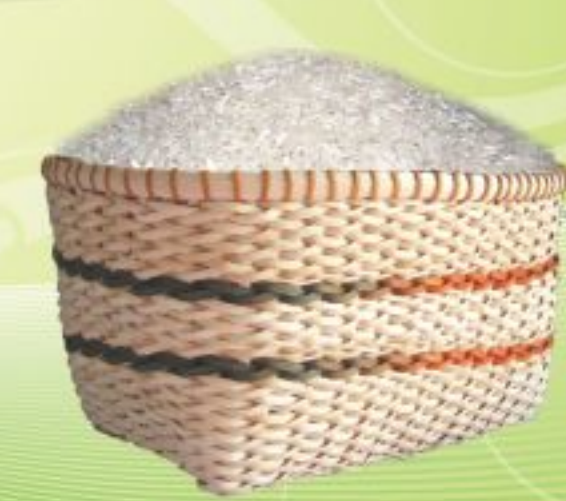
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