

Nation unhappy at slow progress of war crimes trial

Says NHRC chief
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation is disappointed at the slow rate at which the ongoing trial of those accused of crimes against humanity is progressing, said National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman yesterday.

"As the International Crimes Tribunal is unique, there are no prior incidences to rely on and so it requires support from experts. But advice from experts were not implemented properly which led to slow activities," he said while talking to journalists after the inauguration programme of a moot court (legal debate) competition in the capital.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in partnership with Dhaka International University organised the competition titled "8th Henry Dunant Regional Moot Court Competition" at Brac Centre Inn.

Earlier in the programme, Mizanur Rahman said, "Bangladesh as the host country of the competition has a special significance because the war crimes tribunal is trying the accused instead of the international court."

"I invite emerging lawyers from South Asian countries to attend a session of International Crimes Tribunal and share their observations with us," he added.

On recent violence at Ramu, he said it was the result of failure of intelligence agencies and local administration.

"Withdrawal of officer-in-charge of Ramu Police Station makes no sense. It was proved that he was involved in fuelling the incident. He should be interrogated now," he said.

The NHRC chief said the Ramu violence should be investigated without considering any political affiliations.

"Those who committed the crime are criminals. They are against the values of our Liberation War. All political parties should understand this and should try them based on neutral investigation," Mizanur Rahman added.

Marc Achermann, head of delegation of ICRC in Dhaka, among others, spoke.

Six law schools from India, Iran, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are participating in the competition. The winning team from the regional contest will qualify for the Asia-Pacific round to be held in Hong Kong in 2013.



Police produce nine men, arrested in recent drives in the capital with arms, ammunition, and fake arms licences, at a press briefing at Dhaka Metropolitan Police Media Centre yesterday. (Story on Page 2)

PHOTO: STAR

Preparations for Durga Puja in full swing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the festival of Durga Puja is still a week away, preparations for making the five-day festival successful are going on in full swing across the country.

The annual festival "Sharodiya Durga Utsab", the largest festival of Bangalee Hindu community, will start through Sashthi Puja on October 20 and end with the immersion of the goddess' idols on Bijoya Dashami on October 24.

Among various preparations, pandals are being constructed along with making varied clay models of the Goddess Durga.

Monindra Kumar Nath, the general secretary of Bangladesh Puja Udgapan Parishad, said erecting of Protimas (idols) in most of the pandals have been completed and rest of the works like colouring the idols, decoration of the pandals are on the final stage.

Worship of the goddess will be held at around 27,800 pandals this year, while the number was 27,362 last year in the country, he said.

The preparation for the festival is going on almost peacefully across the country, he added.

During recent visits, The Daily Star found that the puja pandals are also being decorated while sculptors are passing busy time with pre-paint tasks as well colouring the idols in the capital.

The main puja pandals in the capital are at Dhakeshwari National Temple, Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University, Ramakrishna Mission, Ramna Kali Mondir, Tanti Bazar and Shankhari Bazar.

Sukumer Pal, the sculptor of the idols at

Dhakeshwari Temple, said he has completed almost all tasks except colouring the idols.

"I have already completed making of idols at four pandals in Manikganj, Kishoreganj and Rajbari," he said adding that he was also involved in making idols at two other puja pandals.

Nirmal Chatterjee, general secretary of Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee, said the puja will be held at 202 pandals in the capital this year, while the number was 199 last year.

Leaders of Bangladesh Puja Udgapan Parishad and Mohanagar Sarbojanin Puja Committee met with Inspector General of Police (IGP) Hassan Mahmood Khandker on Thursday, he said adding that the IGP has assured of providing all-out security during the festival.

"Puja Udgapan Parishad and Puja Committee will jointly set up a monitoring cell at Dhakeshwari National Temple to keep link with the puja pandals and law enforcement agencies during the festival to ensure security," Nirmal Chatterjee said.

Meanwhile, at a programme at Dhakeshwari Temple, IGP Hassan Mahmood yesterday said he was directed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to take necessary measures so that the festival could be held in a peaceful and secured atmosphere.

Superintendents of police will hold meeting with the country's local Hindu community leaders within two days to make a plan for ensuring security, he said.

"I hope, we will be able to celebrate the festival peacefully like the previous years," he added.

Govt urged to prevent attacks on minorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday urged the government to take measures to prevent recurrence of attacks on minorities so that the harmony among peoples of different faiths in the country is maintained.

Protesting all attacks on minorities, including the recent one on the Buddhists in Ramu of Cox's Bazar, they said the administration should be more careful to ensure safety of the people.

They placed the demand at a human chain, organised by Bangladesh Minority Sangram Parishad, at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Addressing the programme, Advocate Ashok Kumar Ghosh, general secretary of the parishad, blamed government's insincerity for recurrence of attacks on minorities.

Communal attacks were carried out at different places, including Cox's Bazar, Narail, Satkhira and Dinajpur, within a few months but the authorities concerned took no meaningful measures against the culprits, he said.

He demanded strict action against the attackers to stop recurrence of their terrorism.

The speakers also urged the government to probe the Ramu attack and bring the perpetrators to justice without delay.

UPGRADING DHAKA AIRPORT Denmark to give Bangladesh \$55m

UNB, Dhaka

Nordea Bank of Denmark will provide around \$55 million to Bangladesh to improve infrastructure and efficiency in air traffic at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka through rehabilitation of its taxiway as well as drainage systems.

A mixed credit agreement to this effect was signed between Nordea Bank of Denmark and the government of Bangladesh on Wednesday.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) Joint Secretary Nurjahan Begum and Nordea Bank Vice President Henrik Brink signed the agreement on behalf of the government of Bangladesh and Nordea Bank respectively, officials at the ERD told the news agency.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) under the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry will implement the project, titled "Upgradation of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport".

Of the mixed credit, the loan amounts to around \$38.51 million and the grant nearly \$15.39 million. The loan is repayable by 20 equal consecutive semi-annual instalments in 10 years.

The management fee and the commitment fee of the loan are 0.325 percent and 0.20 percent respectively. Interest, Bank Margin and EKF (Export Credit Foncier) Premium of this loan will be paid by Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

Officials of the ERD, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh, Danish Embassy and DANIDA mixed credit secretariat, among others, were present at the agreement signing ceremony.

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Road crashes kill five

METRO DESK

Five people were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in Chittagong, Chapainawabganj, Thakurgaon and Rangpur on Thursday and yesterday.

Our staff correspondent from Chittagong reports, a man was killed while two others were injured as a speeding truck hit a pick-up van in Baronighat embankment area of the port city yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Shah Alam Miah, 45, the van driver, hailing from Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong district.

The injured Khokon Mia, 40, of Noakhali, and Nazim Uddin, 45, of Dhaka, were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, police said.

Meanwhile, an unidentified mentally challenged man, aged around 60 years, died instantly as a vehicle ran him over in Baniachar area in Chandanaish upazila of Chittagong district yesterday.

Dohazari Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Nurunnabi Sarker said the vehicle could not be identified.

In Chapainawabganj, a motorcyclist was killed as a tractor hit him at Balugram in sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was Shahidul Islam, 28, of the sadar upazila.

Sub-Inspector Abu Sayed said the tractor knocked Shahidul at around 12:30pm, while he was returning home from his shop on Balugram intersection riding the motorcycle, killing him instantly.

In Thakurgaon, a bicyclist was killed as a power-tiller hit him at Dangipara Cluster village in Haripur upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Mannan, 60, son of late Shakhat Ali of Gochdhumpur village in the upazila.

In Rangpur, a college student was killed as a speeding truck hit him on College Road in Chartola intersection area of Rangpur city on Thursday night.

The deceased Abdul Karim, 17, son of Ahsan Ullah of East Debu village in Pirgachha upazila of Rangpur district, was a first year student of Lions School and College in the city.

He died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

India to declassify files on Bangladesh

BSS, New Delhi

India has launched a process to declassify over two lakh more classified files on Bangladesh and other countries including the South Asian ones, a senior external affairs ministry official said.

"The ministry of external affairs (MEA) is in the process of finalising a major project to declassify another set of 220,000 files - records covering Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan, Iran and Sri Lanka, East Asia, Eurasia and the Americas," several Indian newspapers on Thursday quoted MEA Special Secretary Pinak Chakravarty as saying.

Chakravarty, who is a former Indian high commissioner in Dhaka, however, did not elaborate on the issue as he was addressing

a seminar on nuclear cooperation and non-proliferation while officials familiar with the process earlier said India already declassified 70,000 such documents.

Commenting on the New Delhi's decision, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) Director Arvind Gupta said, "MEA's recent declassification of a large number of files pertaining to India's foreign policy is a step in the right direction".

Speaking at the same function, Nuclear Proliferation International History Project (NPIHP) co-director Christian Ostermann also welcomed the decision saying it "effectively ends an era in which India's role in the Cold War was researched and based on documents from other countries - from Russia, China or Hungary."

World Curry Expo starts tomorrow in London

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH

Celebrating Asian curries, the first international curry exhibition will be held in London, United Kingdom tomorrow.

The World Curry Expo will give visitors an opportunity to know about the UK's curry industry that generates more than £ 4 billion a year.

It will be organised by Curry Life Magazine at Plaza Suite of Park Plaza Riverside Hotel in London.

The expo will include exhibition stands, cooking workshops and an appearance by Indian celebrity chef Utpal Mondal.

It will also include an award giving ceremony to recognise the best 20 chefs in the UK, European Curry Chef of the Year and the Jaguar Award for Excellence.

Today, there are more than 12,000 Indian restaurants, mostly owned and run by Bengalis, in the UK.

The expo organisers aim to help the industry expand across Europe and the rest of the world.

The Daily Star
Star Campus
LINKING YOUNG MINDS

COMING OUT TOMORROW
LINKING YOUNG MINDS

This week's Star Campus, a weekly publication of The Daily Star, will have an interesting set of articles for the readers. The Spotlight is on the different uses of libraries and how they can play a positive role in any student's life. The Campus Trends this week is about how, during a confusing weather like this, hair accessories can play an essential part in terms of both comfort and fashion. The Star Chat this week is with photographer Sarkar Protick who shares stories about his childhood, inspirations and future plans. Don't forget to grab your copy of Star Campus as it hits the country tomorrow, Sunday. And, as always, have a great read!

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