

Increase duties, fines to curb smoking

Suggests Prothom Alo, Progga roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts yesterday recommended innovative methods to create awareness about tobacco use and amending the tobacco control act by imposing higher duties on tobacco products and raising fines to prevent public smoking.

They also advocated accommodating pictorial warnings on tobacco products and creating mass awareness through media and mobile phone messages.

The recommendations came at a roundtable titled "Amendment to the Tobacco Control Act: Importance and Reality", jointly organised by Progga and the daily Prothom Alo at the newspaper's conference room.

Mentioning the draft of tobacco control act, which was approved by the cabinet on Monday, Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the draft emphasises two things -- punishing those who violate rules against tobacco use and preventing smoking.

The minister said there is still a scope for making recommendations regarding

rules and regulations of the act.

Sayid Badrul Karim, chairman of Progga, said tobacco manufacturing companies are actually licenced killers.

Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury of Birdem hospital suggested mobile companies create mass awareness about the dangers of tobacco use by sending informative short messages to the clients.

If people are bombarded by messages like "Smoking can cause heart disease", it can deter them from smoking, he added.

According to Ruhul Amin Rushd, activist and senior news editor at Banglvision, tobacco companies must be brought under more scrutiny so that they stop targeting the young crowd, particularly university students.

Nazma Aktar, MP; Ishrat Chowdhury, technical advisor (Public Health) at International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease; Iqbal Masud, assistant director at Dhaka Ahsania Mission; Md Humayun Kabir, senior secretary at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, spoke among others.

10-TRUCK ARMS HAUL

3 top officials might knew beforehand

Says prosecution witness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A prosecution witness yesterday told a Chittagong court that he thought three government high officials knew about the 10-truck arms haul way ahead of the consignment arrived in Chittagong on April 2, 2004.

The three are the then acting secretary to the industry ministry Nurul Amin, managing director of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL) Md Mohsin Uddin Talukdar, and general manager (admin) KM Enamul Haq.

The witness, Mobin Hossain Khan, former assistant security officer of CUFL, said when he informed Nurul Amin of the haul on April 3, 2004, the secretary asked him not to worry and told him that the government high-ups were informed of the matter. It caused him to doubt if Nurul Amin had been aware of the haul, he told Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 in his deposition.

The same day Mobin submitted a situation report to CUFL general manager Enamul Haq but he forced him to record it as "a haul of illegal goods" other than "a haul of arms and ammunition" in the report, he said. "Later, I verbally requested my superiors to lodge a general diary on behalf of the factory but the CUFL managing director and the general manager showed their reluctance."

On April 2, 2004, around 1,500 wooden boxes containing guns and ammunition were seized at the CUFL jetty. Two cases were filed with Karnaphuli Police Station the next day in this connection.

PARAG ABDUCTION CASE

Two accused denied Bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail petitions of two accused, including Jubo League leader Aminul Haque Molla, in connection with the Parag Mondol abduction case.

The other accused is Mohammad Mamun.

The court also ordered to send them to jail after Keraniganj police produced them before it on completion of three-day remand.

Monirul Islam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of South Keraniganj Police Station and also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, said he gathered important information from the two.

On November 11, some criminals abducted Parag near his house in Keraniganj and shot his mother, sister and their driver.

ZIA CHARITABLE TRUST GRAFT CASE

No more time for Khaleda

Court tells her lawyer

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday warned that it would not allow any more time to BNP chief Khaleda Zia for attending the hearing in Zia Charitable Trust graft case.

The opposition leader skipped the hearing for the eighth time yesterday when the court was to decide whether it would accept the graft charges against her.

Khaleda last appeared in court on February 2 only to secure permanent bail in the case.

Judge Md Zahirul Haque of Senior Special Judge's Court yesterday warned her lawyer Masud Ahmed Talukder as he came up with the eighth time petition.

The court fixed January 1 to hold the hearing after the lawyer told the court that they would not file any more time petition in future.

Khaleda and three other persons were sued for abusing power in raising funds from unknown sources for the charitable trust. The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on August 8, 2011.

The other accused are Harris Chowdhury, former political secretary of Khaleda; Ziaul Islam Munna, assistant private secretary (APS) of Harris; and Monirul Islam Khan, APS of former Dhaka city mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka.

Khaleda, Munna and Monirul have obtained bail from different courts while Harris is on the run.

Khaleda earlier skipped the hearing on March 18, April 29, May 31, July 1, August 5, August 28, and October 1.

Suranjit's ex-APS gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to Omar Faruque Talukdar, sacked assistant private secretary (APS) of former railways minister Suranjit Sengupta, until December 10.

Judge Mohammad Zahirul Haque of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka granted Faruque an ad-interim bail for a period of eight weeks.

On October 2, Faruque, a key figure of the railwaygate scandal, had surrendered before the court seeking anticipatory bail in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The ACC filed the case against him on August 14 for amassing wealth of Tk 1.47 through illegal means.

The next hearing on the bail petition that Faruque submitted yesterday will be held on December 10.

Meanwhile, SM Rashedur Rahman Reza, an ACC assistant director and investigation officer, on Monday submitted the charge sheet against Faruque to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka.

ELECTORAL TALKS WITH EC

Participation of all parties in polls sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Taking part in the talks with the Election Commission, leaders of some political parties yesterday urged the EC to hold the next parliamentary polls with the participation of all political parties.

They also suggested deploying army to ensure security in the polls.

Gonatantri Party, Gano Front, Gonoforum, Khelafat Majlish and Zaker Party joined the talks. Jamayate Ulamaye Islam, a component of BNP-led 18 party alliance, however, did not join it.

Joining the second day's talks with the EC at the conference room of the national economic council in the capital, the leaders emphasised strengthening the EC.

General Secretary of Gonatantri Party

Nurur Rahman Selim demanded that the EC cancel the registration of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami as the party's charter is contradictory to the constitution.

Gono Front's chief Zakir Hossain demanded that the EC take measures for holding parliamentary election free from black money and muscle power.

Gonoforum General Secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu suggested restoring the boundaries of the parliamentary constituencies existed before the December 29, 2008 parliamentary elections.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad at the talks said the EC would finalise its course of action on redrawing the boundaries on the basis of the suggestions of parties.

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Businessman shot in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of armed assailants shot a construction contractor at his Madhya Badda office in the capital last night.

The injured, Iman Ali, 38, was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). He had five bullets lodged in the lower parts of his body.

Around five or six masked goons stormed into Iman's office on the first floor of a three-story building around 8:00pm and opened fire on him when he was sitting with some friends, said Zafar Ullah, one of the friends.

"In the face of the attack, we got dispersed and ran for cover," he told The Daily Star. Once the attackers left the scene they rushed the victim to the hospital, he said.

Badda police said they were yet to unearth the motive behind the shootout.

Meanwhile, Kafrul police recovered the body of a private car driver from Bijoy Sarani opposite the military museum early yesterday.

The body of the deceased, Hossain Gazi, 30, was sent to DMCH. A gamchha (cotton towel) was fastened around his neck, said police.

Injury marks on his body suggested that the man was tortured before he was strangled, said the morgue sources.

Hossain Gazi went missing after he left his employer's house in Banani around 10:00pm Monday for his home in Dakkhin Khan.

A relative of the victim said Gazi had a mobile phone and some money with him, and these were lost.

RISING Stars

Space - apparently there's a lot of it. So much that one Death Star was not enough; so RS made it's own. On the other hand some aliens seem to have taken residence here on Earth while Trekkies fight it out with Star Wars fans. Then we have Halo - a lot of it.

SEE THIS WEEK'S RISING STARS.

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