

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Strict laws sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strict laws should be passed and enforced to prevent violence against women in the country, speakers demanded at a human chain yesterday.

They said the whole society, including the government, political and social parties and individuals, should hold strong protest movements to prevent violence against women.

The human chain was organised by Samajik Protirodh Committee, an alliance of 64 women's groups, in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club, said a press release.

The speakers said women can no longer be treated as property by men, so it is important to call for a strong countrywide social protest movement to end violence against women and abuse of them.

Those involved in the abuse, rape or murder of women should be punished strictly without delay, they demanded.

They observed that women and child abuse will never allow the nation to progress, so the government should take strict initiatives to prevent such atrocities.

Among others, Hameeda Hossain, chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra; Ayesha Khanam, chairperson of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; and Ranjan Karmakar, executive director of Steps Towards Development, spoke at programme.



Students of Dhaka University stage a demonstration on the campus yesterday demanding enactment of a law for the castration of rapists.

PHOTO: STAR

CTG-12 BY-POLL
EC seeks stay on HC order on Jalal's candidature

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday filed a petition with the Supreme Court seeking stay on a High Court order that directed the EC to allow an independent candidate to contest the January 17 Chittagong-12 by-election.

After holding a brief hearing, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of SC Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday sent the petition to the regular bench of the apex court for its hearing today.

The EC's lawyer Additional Attorney General MK Rahman said the full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain today will hear the stay petition filed by the EC.

The HC on January 7, following a writ petition filed by the candidate, Jalal Uddin Ahmed, directed the EC to allow him to contest the by-election.

The by-election's returning officer on December 23 cancelled Jalal's Nomination papers stating that Jalal had failed to submit signatures of one percent of voters of the constituency as required by the Representation of the People Order.

On December 27, 2012, the EC upheld the cancellation decision after rejecting Jalal's appeal against the decision.

The Jatiya Sangsad seat (Chittagong-12) fell vacant following the death of AL lawmaker Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu on November 4, 2012.

PABNA HURASAGAR RIVER

Stop earth-filling: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to stop earth-filling and encroachment of the Hurasagar river in Bera upazila, Pabna within 48 hours.

In response to a writ petition, the court ordered the authorities to suspend the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Bera Pourasava and Water Development Board (WDB) for "development work" on the river's land.

It asked the authorities to submit a progress report on compliance of the directives before it in two weeks.

The directives apart, the HC issued a rule upon the authorities to explain in three weeks why their inaction to stop the earth-filling and encroachment should not be declared illegal and why the MoU should not be cancelled.

LGRD secretary, WDB chairman, dep-

uty commissioner and superintendent of police of Pabna, upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Bera upazila, officer-in-charge of Bera Police Station, mayor and executive engineer of Bera Pourasava have been made respondents to the rule.

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Zafar Ahmed came up with the order and rule after hearing the writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

HRPB filed the petition on January 7 seeking necessary orders following a report of The Daily Star published on December 21 last year under the headline of "Wetland leased from WDB being filled up to set up market, park".

The report says the Bera municipality authorities have started development work on a vast tract of cultivable land beside the flood protection embankment on the Hurasagar river, much to the grievances of the affected people.

Cop killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A policeman was killed and two other people were injured in a road accident on Khulna-Satkhira Highway in Porabari area in Dumuria upazila on Tuesday evening.

Chowdhury Russel Parvez, 42, of Bagerhat Sadar upazila, a body-guard of deputy inspector general of police of Sylhet range, died instantly.

The injured were admitted to Khulna Medical College hospital.

The accident occurred when their motorbike hit a road sign after it collided head-on with a Satkhira-bound motorised van.

ARMS HAUL CASE

Key accused seeks to withdraw statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Hafizur Rahman, a key accused in the sensational 10-truck arms haul and smuggling cases, yesterday prayed to a Chittagong court to withdraw his confessional statement made before a magistrate.

The accused in his petition to the Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 mentioned that he was threatened with death for making the confession, said Hafizur's counsel advocate Mahmudul Haq.

In his confession on March 2, 2009 before the then metropolitan magistrate of Chittagong MM Osman Gani, the accused quoted Ulfa (United Liberation Front of Assam) leader Paresh Barua as claiming to have permission and help from the Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Limited (CUFL), coast guard and the then chiefs of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and National Security Intelligence (NSI) for unloading the arms cache, said an investigation officer.

EX-Ctg MAGISTRATE TESTIFIES

Testifying at the tribunal yesterday, MM Osman Gani said he had recorded the confessional statements of four accused and prosecution witnesses in the cases.

"I followed all the rules and regulations for recording the statements," said Osman, now joint district and sessions judge.

During cross-examination by the defence counsels, the judge said he did not put pressure on Hafizur to confess.

Osman denied the allegation of the defence that police had tortured Hafizur and later produced him before his court.

Replying to a query, Osman said, "I asked Hafizur where he was brought before me from, but he could not answer."

Asked if he knew about the prayer of Hafizur to withdraw his confessional statement, Osman replied in the negative.

The court adjourned its proceedings till January 27, when the cross-examination of the judge will resume.

Yesterday, 11 accused, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and former industries minister Matiur Rahman Nizami were in the dock.

On April 2, 2004, around 1,500 wooden boxes containing submachine guns, AK-47 assault rifles, submachine carbines, Chinese pistols, rocket shells and launchers, hand grenades and bullets were seized from two vessels at the jetty of CUFL.



Communist Party of Bangladesh and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal stage a sit-in in front of the Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission office in the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday demanding withdrawal of the recent fuel price hike.

PHOTO: STAR

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