

Pinak-6 owner gets bail in case for negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted six months' interim bail to Abu Bakkar Siddique, owner of Pinak-6 launch, which capsized with more than 250 passengers on the Padma last August, in a case filed for negligence.

Following a bail petition filed by Abu Bakkar, the HC also issued a rule upon the government to explain why the petitioner should not be granted regular bail in this case.

The court granted bail after Abu Bakkar's lawyer said that his client was innocent and was not responsible for Pinak-6 carrying additional passengers.

Pinak-6, a double-decker passenger carrier vessel, which had a capacity of 85 passengers, capsized on August 4 last year. A total of 48 bodies were recovered and 62 remained missing.

Deputy Attorney General Md Bashir Ullah told The Daily Star that Jahangir Zia, traffic inspector at Mawa river port, filed the case on August 5 saying that the launch carried passengers more than three times its capacity for profit.

Abu Bakkar Siddique was arrested on August 14 in Chittagong. Bashir Ullah said they would move an appeal before the Supreme Court seeking a stay on the HC order.

Similarly, Mirza Saifur Rahman, surveyor of the vessel, was reinstated in less than two months after he was suspended for negligence due to the shipping minister's intense pressure for reinstatement on the plea of "ensuring navigational safety."

A ministerial probe body found Mirza directly responsible for the tragedy.

DEMAND FOR JUSTICE REVERBERATES OUTSIDE CAPITAL



Clockwise from left, Progotishil Chhatra Jote brings out a procession in Rangpur city, Gonojagoron Mancha forms a human chain in front of Manikganj Press Club, and teachers of Khulna University form one on the campus yesterday, uttering strong condemnations of the murder of secular writer Avijit Roy and demanding immediate arrest of the killers.



PHOTO: STAR

PM's warning for DS to hurt media freedom

Says Human Rights Forum Bangladesh STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB) yesterday expressed grave concern at the prime minister's warning of actions against The Daily Star for publishing the picture of a poster of Hizbut-Tahrir, a banned militant organisation.

The PM's remarks will seriously affect the freedom of mass media, said a statement signed by Sultan Kamal, convener of the forum of 19 human rights bodies.

The Daily Star published the photograph on February 11, under the headline "Fanatics raise their ugly heads again".

The caption read, "Taking advantage of the current political crisis in the country accompanied by wanton violence, banned extremist Islamist organisation Hizbut-Tahrir published and pasted posters in the capital in an attempt to foment unrest within the armed forces. This poster was found pasted on a wall in an alleyway near Bangla Motor intersection yesterday."

HRFB pointed out that even though a lawyer filed a case against The Daily Star's Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam, Chief News Editor Syed Ashfaqul Huq, and Chief Photographer SK Enamul Haq on February 15, three days later the prime minister addressing the parliament said The Daily Star was trying to instigate a banned outfit by publishing its poster.

"Action will be taken against those who tried to patronise Hizbut-Tahrir by publishing its poster," she said.

HRFB observed, "A statement by the chief executive of the country from a significant place as that of the

New policies must address violence against women

Daily Star-UNFPA roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Violence against women and child marriages, which have remained challenges for the country, should be addressed in the upcoming international, regional and national level policies, noted discussants at a roundtable yesterday.

Representatives from the government, NGOs and development organisations shared their views on women-related issues at the "Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment" organised on the occasion of International Women's Day by The Daily Star and UNFPA at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

They said despite Bangladesh's achievements in areas of health, education and employment and forma-

tion of a number of women friendly laws and policies, social change required to improve women's lives did not occur.

"You can't have physical violence against two-thirds of the population if they are valued," said Christine Hunter, representative from UN Women, referring to statistics of violence against women in the country.

Citing examples of what the country lacks in preventing violence against women, including laws to cover the rights of domestic workers and marital rape, Hunter said policies, systems and practices enabling women to fully exercise their opportunity and rights in the context of Bangladesh should be looked into.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said, "In the 21st

century the discrimination between one human being and another is very shameful."

He emphasised the importance of gender equality for creating a democratic and developed nation.

Ayesha Khanam, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, said housing, transport and child care are huge challenges for professional women.

Toufiq Khan, gender specialist from the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said although the percentage of women in the labour market in the last 20 years increased from four percent to 36 in 2010, a recent CPD survey showed that only 25 percent of the currently unemployed women want to join the labour force.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

SKIPPING OF CTG COURT DURING HARTALS

Pro-BNP-Jamaat lawyers foil meet to end practice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A meeting called by some Chittagong Bar Association members seeking an end to the over a quarter-century-old practice of refraining from attending court during hartal was cancelled yesterday after pro-BNP-Jamaat-Islami lawyers started breaking chairs, say witnesses.

The practice came into force in Chittagong courts in 1989, marked by HM Ershad's autocratic rule. The BNP-led 20-party alliance's hartals in the last two months has created a backlog of cases, said court sources.

Over 200 lawyers had arrived in room 3 of the association's auditorium to attend the meeting, scheduled to be presided over by member AZM Moinul Haque Chowdhury, when the mob entered a procession around 1:40pm.

Around 250 members of the association, comprising some 4,000 members, had sought the meeting through an application to the secretary on February 18. When the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Participants at a "Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment" organised on the occasion of International Women's Day by The Daily Star and UNFPA at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

All unite to restore normalcy

Urges Dr Kamal; labels violence in opposition's movement as terrorism; accuses govt of insincerity in tackling it as extra-judicial killings is not the way

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jurist Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called for the unity of the people to bring back normalcy in the country which has been witnessing widespread arson attacks and vandalism amid the BNP-led 20-party alliance's blockade since January 6.

"What is happening now in the name of movement is terrorism and violence. The government is bound to contain it," he told a discussion at Jatiya Press Club.

However, the government efforts to check violence do not seem sincere, he said. "Extrajudicial killings cannot be a step to

build unity."

The discussion was organised by Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD-Rab) to mark the first hoisting of the country's national flag on March 2, 1971. On that day, JSD leader ASM Abdur Rab hoisted Bangladesh's flag at Dhaka University as a student leader.

"We are talking of people's unity...but the government's attitude towards us seems to mean that we are nobody in this country," said Dr Kamal, chief of Gonoforum.

He said bad politics had created partisanship in a section of the law enforcers.

"The most dangerous thing is arrests in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Autistic children can lead normal lives

Early detection, friendly society, mainstreaming needed, say experts

BSS, Dhaka

Abul Hasan first noticed his child not communicating properly when the kid was two year old.

Hasan, a private company employee, rushed the child to a children evolving centre where he was told that the two-year-old was suffering from autism. Four years have passed since the father started supporting his kid to lead a normal life.

Autism is a neuro-developmental disorder which is characterised by impaired social interaction, poor verbal and non-verbal communication, restricted and repetitive behaviour.

Early diagnosis of autism can help a child live a more normal life, said Dr Sharifa Shahjadi, assistant professor of the physiology department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

Autistic children can be mainstreamed by ensuring a pollution-free environment and feeding them unadulterated food, she added. Romela, who teaches autistic chil-

dren, emphasised that parents should be more careful while the society should be more supportive towards these special children.

Globally, occupational therapy and food nursing are considered as the main treatment for autistic children but in Bangladesh a comprehensive medical treatment is yet to be developed, she added.

Comprehensive treatment such as paediatric, neuro-rehabilitation, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and physiotherapy, in some cases, can bring good results for autistic children, also suggested Umme Sayka Nila, an occupational therapist.

There is even no accurate statistics about autism, communication disorder or autism spectrum disorder affected children in the country, but according to experts the number is around 1.5 lakh.

Every government hospital in the country has a children evolving centre but most people are not aware of it. Besides, there is a government law which says every school has to admit

an autistic child for every 10 normal children admitted. However, the law is rarely enforced.

But mental development of autistic children is possible by giving more time to children, talking about different subjects and asking them to tell stories and finally admitting the children to a normal school, Dr Sharifa explained.

Sometimes, the endeavour of mainstreaming autistic children is hampered by the negative attitude of the society, schools and family members.

Narrating his own experience, Mortaza Hasan said he went to a school last November to admit his communication disorder affected child.

"But the school authorities not only refused to admit the child but also raised questions about the kid's birth," he added.

Mortaza said it is very challenging to mainstream autistic children, but not impossible. He urged the media and people's representatives to work together to attain the objective.

restaurant

Welcomes

Emma Dean

Winner of MasterChef Australia 2013

"An Evening with Emma Dean"

7 PM, Wednesday, March 4, 2015

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