

More needs to be done

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April 24 two years ago, bears testimony to this.

Trade unions have termed the Rana Plaza disaster "mass industrial killing" for forcing workers to work in the faulty building where a crack was noticed the day before.

Rights bodies believe that inordinate delay in bringing the perpetrators of previous disasters (such as the ones at Tazreen Fashion and Spectrum) to justice, poor enforcement of labour laws and inadequate monitoring of factory safety rules by government agencies are responsible for such industrial crimes.

"Trials of cases from the Spectrum disaster to Rana Plaza collapse are still on," said Barrister Sarah Hossain at a programme on Rana Plaza collapse early last week.

Charge sheets of lawsuits filed in connection with the Rana Plaza collapse are yet to be placed and injured victims and families of the dead workers are yet to fully compensated.

Some 53 percent of the survivors have asked for compensation from the international brands and other "duty bearers", said ActionAid Bangladesh last week in a survey report.

"Many of them also believe that bringing perpetrators to the court will ensure justice to the victims of Rana Plaza col-

lapse," it said. Some 55 percent of the Rana Plaza survivors are still unemployed, said ActionAid.

The collapse raised calls to improve building and workplace safety, and ensure labour rights. It also called into question the international clothing brands' role.

As a result of a global outcry following the disaster, two groups -- Accord, a platform of 190 clothing brands in Europe, and Alliance, a body of 26 American brands -- launched large-scale safety inspections on factories. More than 2,500 factories have been inspected so far.

IndustriALL Global Union, an international body fighting for better working conditions and trade union rights, said Bangladesh still cannot claim that even one of its 4,000 active garment factories is 100 percent safe for workers.

IndustriALL also rued the lack of funds needed to compensate the injured workers and the dependants of the dead.

The compensation fund is still missing \$6 million out of the targeted \$30 million.

UNI Global Union General Secretary Philip Jennings said, "It's outrageous that families who lost their mothers and breadwinners have still not been fully compensated because a group of multinationals can't find it in their hearts or

deep pockets to pay the \$6 million missing from the compensation fund."

The movement for workers' rights has nonetheless seen a few achievements since the disaster happened.

Some 32 factories have been closed down for inadequate safety arrangements and the government has taken some steps to strengthen the factory inspection office. Workers' minimum wage has been increased and the labour law amended.

Furthermore, around 300 trade unions have received registration, which is less than 3 percent of the total garment factories in the country, said Alonzo Suson, Bangladesh country director of Solidarity Centre.

Noting the activities, the CPD last week said there have been some positive changes in improving workplace safety and labour rights after two years of the disaster.

However, rights body Human Rights Watch last week said garment workers in Bangladesh still face poor working conditions and anti-union tactics by employers, including assaults on union organisers.

It said the government and Western retailers can and should do more to enforce international labour standards to protect workers' rights, including their right to form unions and advocate for better conditions.

Traffic jam-free

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In his election pledges styled "traffic congestion free beautiful Dhaka," the JP-backed candidate said he would sincerely try to free DNCC from traffic congestion with the help of the government.

Ensuring uninterrupted utility services like gas, electricity and water and eviction of the grabbers from the river Turag are also some of his major pledges.

When asked the city corporations have nothing to do with those utility services as Titas Gas Company, Desco and Wasa look after these, Bahauddin said he would constantly remain engaged with these authorities to ensure better services for the city people.

He also said he would free Dhaka from mosquitoes and flies and plant trees on traffic islands and open space.

On road digging by different utility service providers causing sufferings to city people,

Bahauddin said he would coordinate with the authorities concerned to ensure minimum public suffering.

In his eighteen-point manifesto, Bahauddin said he would build a corruption free city corporation if elected.

In his view, communications, sewerage system, water, drainage system and pollution are five major problems for DNCC.

"I will devote myself to resolving these problems on a priority basis if I am elected as the mayor," he added.

Armenia marks

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recognising the massacre as genocide, saying he bowed in memory of the victims.

"Important words have already been said in Turkey, but others are still expected, so that shared grief can become shared destiny,"

Hollande told an audience that also included the leaders of Cyprus and Serbia and delegates from some 60 countries.

President Vladimir Putin for his part said Russia was standing shoulder to shoulder with ex-Soviet Armenia, still a close ally for Moscow in the region.

"There is no and cannot be justification for mass murder of people," said Putin.

The Russian leader also used the commemorations to call on France to restore ties after a year of tensions over Ukraine, signalling his apparent desire to break out of international isolation.

Earlier in the day the leaders, walking in the rain, laid flowers at a memorial commemorating the victims.

Each put a yellow rose at the centre of a wreath resembling a forget-me-not, a flower that has become a symbol of the genocide remembrance.

"I am grateful to all those who are here to once again confirm your commitment to human values, to say that nothing is forgotten, that after 100 years we remember," Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian told his guests.

But the patchy list of foreign dignitaries attending the commemorations highlighted a lack of international consensus over Armenia's bid to get the massacres recognised internationally as a genocide.

US President Barack Obama on Thursday went only so far as to describe the massacres as "terrible carnage".

More than 20 nations -- including France and Russia but not the United States -- have so far recognised the genocide, a definition supported by numerous historians, but vehemently opposed by Turkey.

Germany became the latest country to recognise the genocide, with President Joachim Gauck saying Thursday that his country, then an ally of the Ottomans, bore partial blame for the bloodletting.

The Armenian Church on Thursday conferred sainthood on the genocide victims in what was believed to be the biggest canonisation service in history.

Muslim Turkey, which was born out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, has refused to call the slaughter of Christian Armenians genocide.

EU, US to work

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Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility Marianne Thyssen; US Trade Representative Michael Froman; EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmström; US Agency for International Development (USAID) Acting Administrator Alfonso E Lenhardt; and EU Commissioner in charge of International Cooperation and Development Neven Mimica released the statement.

They urged the government to issue -- without further delays -- the implementing rules for Bangladesh Labour Act, consistent with international labour standards.

"Similarly, we call upon the Government of Bangladesh to enact legislation on economic processing zones that ensures workers inside the zones enjoy rights commensurate with those outside the zones," said the statement.

"Also of pressing concern, the government should respond swiftly to cases of unfair labour practices, violence, and harassment against trade unions and workers' representatives."

"We note that advances in health, safety, and labour rights will remain fragile and impermanent if workers are unable to exercise those rights and organise to represent their interests and concerns," it said.

Appreciating the progress made so far, the statement said significant work remains to be done under the Sustainability Compact -- a statement of principles and commitments designed to bring about a lasting transformation in the sector -- to realise its goals.

"In particular, we encourage and support the Government of Bangladesh's efforts to continue reforming its labour laws, in close consultations with the ILO, complete the safety inspections of all RMG factories and continue to register unions in a timely and transparent way," it said.

In the aftermath of the Rana Plaza tragedy, the EU, the USA and the ILO joined hands with Bangladesh to undertake a series of significant commitments to foster respect for fundamental labour rights and ensure workers' safety in the garment sector.

2 suspects arrested

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The two arrestees were paraded before the media at the media centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police on Minto Road.

Speaking at a press conference there, SM Mahfuzul Haq Nuruzzaman, deputy inspector general (Dhaka range) of police, said the arrestees were suspected to be members of a militant group. The robbers on Tuesday carried out the deadly attack on Kathgora branch of Bangladesh Commerce Bank Limited (BCBL) either to create havoc or to raise fund for militant activities, he added.

The DIG said the Kathgora branch of BCBL handles only a small number of transactions daily. Had the criminals' motive been to rob a bank, they would have targeted a bigger branch, he noted.

Talking to newsmen during the press briefing, the two arrestees denied their involvement in the burglary.

Some 10 robbers swooped on the bank in broad daylight on Tuesday afternoon and killed four people, including the branch manager.

While escaping the scene, they blasted hand grenades and stabbed many locals, leaving three more dead and around 25 injured. Locals managed to catch three robbers. One of them was beaten to death while two others were handed over to the police.

The two motorbikes were registered in the name of one Ershad who is a suspect, said police.

According to the DIG, the victims' injury marks were in the same areas of

their bodies which indicate that the criminals were trained up well. The bombs and grenade-like objects they had exploded during the robbery are new in Bangladesh and believed to be brought from abroad, he added.

Nuruzzaman claimed that the robbers were former members of Islami Chhatra Shibir, but now they are involved with militant organisations.

Militants usually rent isolated houses from owners and stash their arms and ammo there. In the guise of popcorn vendors, drivers or garment workers, they visit the targeted spots and subsequently carry out operations, said police.

Sixteen injured, including two arrested robbers Borhan Uddin and Saiful Islam, were receiving treatment at Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar yesterday, reports our Savar correspondent.

Seven of them were at the intensive care unit.

VICTIM'S WIFE GIVEN JOB
The wife of slain branch manager Waliullah Subin has been given a job at the same bank.

A representative of the BCBL went to their Jamalpur home yesterday and handed over the letter of employment to Mahmuda Mehzabin Merry, Subin's widow.

The couple had four children aged between two and eight, and the bank gave her the job so that she could support her family, Merry told The Daily Star last night.

Online bullying aimed

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in public and to law enforcement agencies instead of only being vocal in social media so that the authorities can see for themselves how real the threat is, and take necessary steps so that these men who are openly threatening to rape and assault women and actively encouraging and inciting others to participate in these crimes can be brought to justice."

She added that many people spoke in support of such abhorrent sentiments, but the majority spoke out against these and were extremely upset. "There should be legal consequences for issuing such threats," she said.

The GDs state that making such remarks is tantamount to encouraging, planning, and organising sexual crimes like sexual harassment, rape and molestation and thus warrants legal action.

A law expert and editor of Dhaka Law Report, Md Khorshed Alam Khan said threatening women with rape and any form of sexual violence was a crime under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Asked what steps police are taking, Sheikh Shahenur Rahman, inspector (Investigation) of Banani Police Station, said, "It is very difficult to identify people based on their Facebook profiles only. But the Detective Branch is working on it now."

Some 30 to 40 unidentified persons molested around 20 females for about an hour near the Suhrawardy Udyan gate on Dhaka University campus on April 14. Ten days into the incident, the law enforcers are yet to arrest anyone.

The CCIV footage that police released on April 17 clearly shows multiple incidents of sexual assault on women by the rowdy men. Still, police claim the footage does not offer any evidence of sexual assault.

HATE PROPAGANDA AT ITS BASEST

The Daily Star has found a Facebook page titled "Deswa Official" which is filled with malicious posts against Nababarsha celebrations, secularism, freedom of women and the ongoing movement against sexual assaults on women on Pahela Baishakh.

It posted a photo in which a girl is holding a placard urging men to change their attitude towards women.

Introducing her as a Hindu, it wrote, "Hindus are spreading various confusing theories as part of their conspiracy to lead Muslims away from the practice of Purdah. A communal woman [name withdrawn] has worked behind this plot."

In another post, it made a number of demands: "1. Ban Pahela Baishakh in the Muslim majority country; 2. Ban forever the so-called new year celebration at DU-Ramna; 3. Cancel the leave on Pahela Baishakh as it would reduce the crowd automatically; and 4. Cancel all government patronisation of Pahela Baishakh."

The page even went on to label the

school curriculums as anti-Islamic.

Sharing an image of Pahela Baishakh procession printed in what it claims to be the Page 2 of Bangla textbook of Class-V, an April 17 post says: "Do you think the tender mind of a child in a Muslim majority country should be tainted with Hindu culture?"

Referring to Bangladesh Chhatra Union leader Liton Nandi, who rescued a number of women from sex offenders during the Pahela Baishakh celebrations, a post says Liton is a Hindu and

he acted only to protect his own religious culture and tradition, not to protect women.

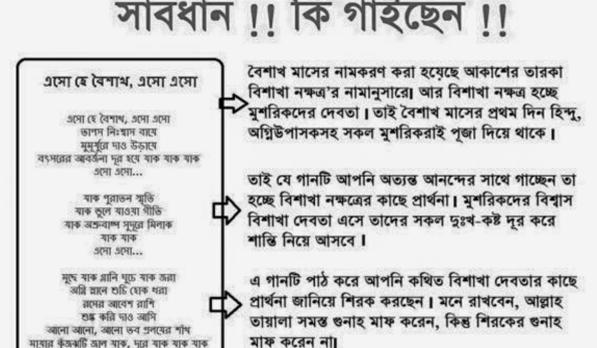
It claimed in a post that the Bengali month of Baishakh was named after a Hindu god and anyone celebrating the onset of the month will be considered as "Mushriks" or apostates. It also asked Muslims not to sing the Eso Hey Baishakh song, an inseparable part of the Nababarsha celebration.

মে শ্রেণী, আমার বাংলা বই, পৃষ্ঠা: ২



মে শ্রেণীর আমার বাংলা বই এর ২য় পৃষ্ঠায় আছে পহেলা বৈশাখের কথিত মঙ্গল শোভাযাত্রার ছবি। আপনি কি মনে করেন, যে দেশের অধিকাংশ মানুষ মুসলমান, সে দেশের পাঠ্যপুস্তকে কোমলমতি শিশুদের মঙ্গল শোভাযাত্রার মত একটি হিন্দুয়ানী কালচার শেখানো ঠিক ??

সাবধান !! কি গাইছেন !!



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বৈশাখ মাসের নামকরণ করা হয়েছে আকাশের তারকা বিশাখা নক্ষত্র নামানুসারে। আর বিশাখা নক্ষত্র হচ্ছে মুরিকদের দেবতা। তাই বৈশাখ মাসের প্রথম দিন হিন্দু, অগ্নিউপাসকসহ সকল মুরিকরাই পূজা দিয়ে থাকে।

তাই যে গানটি আপনি অভ্যস্ত আনন্দের সাথে গাচ্ছেন তা হচ্ছে বিশাখা নক্ষত্রের কাছে প্রার্থনা। মুরিকদের বিশাখা বিশাখা দেবতা এসে তাদের সকল দুঃখ-কষ্ট দূর করে শান্তি নিয়ে আসবে।

এ গানটি পাঠ করে আপনি কথিত বিশাখা দেবতার কাছে প্রার্থনা জানিয়ে শিরক করছেন। মনে রাখবেন, আল্লাহ তায়ালা সমস্ত গুনাহ মাফ করেন, কিন্তু শিরকের গুনাহ মাফ করেন না।

আমার বাংলা বই

প্রথম শ্রেণী



৭টি কবিতা আছে
এর মধ্যে ৪টি ইসলাম বিদ্বেষী ও
নাতিকদের

১) কবিতা জাতীয় সংগীত -- স্বাধীনতা --
কবির মুসলিম ও বাংলাদেশী বিদ্বেষী হিন্দু

২) বাক বাবুস পায়রা -- সুফিয়া
কামাল -- ইসলাম বিদ্বেষী নাতিক

৩) হন হন, পন পন সুকুমার রায় -- হিন্দু

৪) কবিতা: ছুটি-রবীন্দ্রনাথ -- কবির
মুসলিম ও বাংলাদেশী বিদ্বেষী হিন্দু

**ইসলাম বিদ্বেষী লেখকদের শতকরা
পরিমাণ ৫৭.১৪ %**

Bangla textbook lessons of Class I and V and a famous Tagore song are termed "anti-Islam and part of Hindu culture" in three posts of a Facebook page called Deswa Official.

IMAGE: FACEBOOK

115 children killed

FROM PAGE 16

rights agency said Friday at least 551 of the people who died were civilians.

Unicef meanwhile said that since March 26, at least 140 children had been recruited by armed groups.

The agency's representative in Yemen Julien Harneis said earlier this month that up to a third of fighters in the country were children.

In Yemen's tribal culture, it is common for boys to take up arms at a young age -- something that is having dire consequences amid the spiralling conflict.

On Friday, Harneis pointed out in a statement that "hundreds of

thousands of children in Yemen... continue to live in the most dangerous circumstances, many waking up scared in the middle of the night to the sounds of bombing and gunfire."

"The number of child casualties shows clearly how devastating this conflict continues to be for the country's children," he said.

The spiralling conflict has fuelled a humanitarian disaster in a country that was already suffering from shortages before the latest fighting erupted.

The UN's World Food Programme warned Friday that a full 12 million people in the country did not know

where their next meal was coming from -- a 13-percent increase since the conflict escalated in late March.

The agency said it was delivering food to more than 100,000 people sheltered around the southern port city of Aden.

"But we are struggling to reach people because of deteriorating security," a WFP statement said, adding that dire fuel shortages were also hampering the response.

The food agency said it hoped to provide emergency food aid to 2.5 million people from May to July.

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