

Nasim calls Khaleda confused leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Terming BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia a "confused leader", Awami League leader Mohammad Nasim yesterday said she had ruined her party as well as BNP-led opposition alliance.

"She lost to Sheikh Hasina in the area of politics as she had declared that she would not contest in the polls under Sheikh Hasina's administration, but her party is now contesting [in UP polls] with party's electoral symbol 'sheaf of paddy'," he said.

The health minister and AL presidium member was addressing a discussion on "Bangabandhu's March 7 Speech and Our Independence", organised by the Bangladesh National Alliance (BNA) led by former minister and BNP leader Nazmul Huda at Supreme Court Bar Association.

Nasim appreciated Nazmul Huda and others of the alliance who left BNP, saying Huda had done a good job as he left the party.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon said Bangabandhu's March 7 speech was one of the best in the world that gave a clear declaration of war.

Menon lambasted Khaleda as she made controversial remarks on the number of martyrs of the Liberation War.

Such remark is only possible for them who do not believe in independence of Bangladesh and had no relation to the Liberation War, he added.

Nazmul Huda, convener of Trinamool BNP, read out a keynote paper on Bangabandhu's March 7 speech, saying the war was carried out in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

After the brutal attack on the Bangalis on March 26 by the Pakistan Army in 1971, Maj Ziaur Rahman announced the independence of Bangladesh on radio on behalf of Bangabandhu as he was inspired and guided by the speech of Mujib, he added.



Law Minister Anisul Huq addresses a views exchange meeting, "Partnership of Manusher Jonno Foundation in Quality Enhancement of Government Legal Aid Services: Success, Potential and Experience", jointly organised by National Legal Aid Services Organization and MJF in the capital's Cirdap auditorium yesterday. *Sitting from left, Prof Shahnaz Huda, Department of Law Joint Secretary (admin) Justice Bikash Kumar Saha, Supreme Court Registrar General Syed Aminul Islam and MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam.* PHOTO: STAR

Awareness key to ensuring legal right of insolvents

MJF-NLASO discussion on govt legal aid services told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday underscored the need for creating awareness about government's legal aid services among insolvent people and victims so that none is deprived of legal assistance, a constitutional right.

Pointing out that a huge amount of government funds returns unused every year, they said the money would be utilised if people were aware of the services that included appointing lawyers, legal counselling, and mediation.

They were addressing a discussion titled "Partnership of Manusher Jonno Foundation in Quality Enhancement of Government Legal Aid Services: Success, Potential and Experience", organised jointly by National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO) and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) in the capital's Cirdap auditorium.

Law Minister Anisul Huq said after the Union Parishad elections, the ministry would hold meetings

with all elected union chairmen and members to make them aware of the legal aid services.

He also underscored the need for collective initiatives and effective enforcement of law to change people's mindset in filing false cases; otherwise the practice would result in doubling the case backlog in the country.

"In many instances, it is seen that cases are filed to harass. It does not matter what would it result; cases are filed to make one visit the court and instil a fear of imprisonment," he said.

"I want to come out of that bad culture."

The minister said, "If we can't come out of the evil practice, then the case backlog, which is now 30 lakh, will be 60 lakh. To reduce it to 15 lakh, we must get rid of this practice."

Saying that filing of false cases is punishable by law, he said if the law was enforced more effectively, people's mindset would be changed.

Registrar General of the Supreme

Court Syed Aminul Islam called upon people not to see legal aid services as a charity.

"Getting legal aid is a constitutional right of the insolvent people, and the government is constitutionally bound to provide the service," he said.

He requested legal aid officers in every district who would mediate disputes at pre-case and post-case level.

He also urged the government to take necessary steps so that people in jail could talk to their lawyers to get legal aid, which is not practiced currently.

Law professor of Dhaka University Shahnaz Huda said the concept of legal aid should be spread to the grassroots level so that poor, underprivileged people and rape and acid victims could seek help.

They also unveiled a book "Legal Aid System in Bangladesh and International Context", written by Senior Judicial Magistrate Jasim

Uddin.

The official said there were misconceptions among people about legal aid, and he addressed that in his book.

Executive Director of MJF Shaheen Anam said in many districts, there were no legal aid services, MJF was working in those districts to address the problem.

She said MJF was ready to cooperate with the government in constructive works.

Programme Coordinator of MJF Ruma Sultana highlighted the works done by the organisation in different districts.

She said MJF had carried out different activities to make the legal aid service committees active in 110 unions, 35 upazilas, and 17 districts.

In addition, MJF has held workshops to encourage panel lawyers, she added.

Joint Secretary (admin) of Law and Justice Division Bikash Kumar Saha presided over the discussion.



Nothing lifts the spirits more than a glimpse of blossoming boughs. Trees sprout new leaves with the old ones carpeting the ground, indicating the spring, the queen of all seasons, is well into its duration. The photo was taken at Lakkatora rubber garden in Sylhet yesterday. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

DU STUDENT'S ROAD DEATH Teachers, students demand punishment for driver, owners

DU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and students of criminology department at Dhaka University demanded an exemplary punishment for driver and owners of an Eagle Paribahan bus, who were responsible for the killing of Shoriful Islam, a third year student of the department, in a traffic accident.

On Saturday, three persons, including Shoriful, were killed and another was injured when the bus ramed a three-wheeler carrying them at Kalabari Point on Dhaka-Barisal highway in Madaripur Sadar. Police seized the bus on the day, but its driver managed to flee.

Govt plans 16,000MW power

FROM PAGE 4

policy aimed at ensuring 10 percent renewable energy supply to the national power grid by the year 2021.

The government launched short, medium and long-term programmes to increase power supply and some 44 lakh solar home systems (SHSs) were installed to ensure supply of power to two crore rural people.

He said the present government extended the electricity distribution lines to 41,148 kilometres during the last two years.

HC clears way

FROM PAGE 4

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami and 10 others under the Emergency Powers Rules.

Of them, Koko, former BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and former finance minister M Saifur Rahman died.

The case statement says, there was corruption in the awarding of a contract to Global Agro Trade (Pvt) Company Ltd (Gatco) for container management at inland depots in Dhaka and Chittagong. The graft allegedly cost the state exchequer over Tk 1,000 crore. On August 13, 2008, following the petition of Zulfiqar, the HC stayed the case proceedings against him and issued a rule upon the government and the ACC to explain why the case proceedings should not be quashed.

Early marriage violation of girls' rights

FROM PAGE 3

gave birth before reaching 17 years of age.

Farhana Zesmin Hasan, project director of IMAGE, said a large number of girls in Bangladesh were getting married before 18, the official age of adulthood. These girls are getting into conjugal life overnight without any information or preparation and completion of education, she said.

The birth of premature babies is a major cause of child mortality and adolescent girls give birth to more premature babies, said Dr Rabeya Khatun, adolescent expert of the World Health Organization (WHO). Mahmudul Kabir, country director of Terre Des Hommes Netherlands, said loopholes in the birth registration process should be removed as guardians showed their daughter's age to be 18 or more in the birth certificate though their actual age was below 18. Dr Deen Mohammad Nurul Haque, direc-

torgeneral of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), said community clinics were playing a huge role to empower women.

Every sector will have to pitch in to prevent child marriage, he said.

Dr Makhduma Nargis, chief coordinator of community clinics, said there were 13,315 community clinics in the country with a workforce of 8 to 9 lakh, and a good number of them were women.

Abdul Qayyum, associate editor of Prothom Alo, moderated the programme, while Mohammad Sharif, line director (MCRH) of Directorate General of Family Planning; Arnob Chakrabarty, managing director of RedOrange; Dr Muhammad Munir Hussain, national programme officer for adolescents and youth of UNFPA, and Farhana Akhtar, research and knowledge management specialist of IMAGE, addressed the roundtable.

Woman killed in port city

FROM PAGE 4

Later, Parveen was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctors said she was brought dead to the hospital, Majed said.

Contacted, Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Bayezid Bostami police, said

the trio might have entered the house to rob, and strangled her when she began screaming.

They also took away gold ornaments and Tk 5,000, the OC said, quoting the deceased's son. Police probe is underway in this connection.

NEWS IN brief

Domestic help found dead in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered the body of a teenage domestic help from the capital's Kafrul yesterday.

Jonia, 14, died as she fell from the roof of a 10-storey building, said Shikdar Shamim Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kafrul Police Station.

The girl used to work at the apartment occupied by Ahsan Habib, a government official, in the building but she quit on Saturday, he added.

The girl's cousin Sohel, however, said she left her home around 8:00am yesterday to work there and the news of her death reached them a couple of hours later.

Police are investigating the incident, the OC said.

UCBL official sent to jail in money laundering case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chittagong court yesterday sent a bank official to jail after he surrendered before it in a money laundering case.

The official is Golam Kabir, managing director of Geodetic Survey Corporation of United Commercial Bank Ltd (UCBL).

Public prosecutor Mejbah Uddin Chowdhury said in June 2012, Kabir helped importer Ali Abbas -- proprietor of M/S Abbas Trading in Anderkilla -- get a loan of Tk 18.18 crore from UCBL Katunganj branch to open a LC for importing rice.

Showing Abbas's property, which was mortgaged to Krishi Bank's Agrabad Branch, as non-mortgaged property, Kabir helped Abbas get the loan. Later, the money was laundered abroad, said the PP.

The Anti Corruption Commission lodged the case accusing nine people including Abbas -- who is in jail -- and Kabir in January, 2013. Seven accused are on bail, the PP added.

Ramakrishna's birthday celebration begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-day programme will begin today at Ramakrishna Mission in the capital, marking the 181st birth anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna, says a press release.

The events include annual festival of Ramakrishna Mission High School, discussions, devotional songs, prayers, etc.

The programme will conclude with a cultural event.

Ctg mobile court fines errant bakery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court yesterday fined a bakery Tk1 lakh in Panchlaish area of port city on different charges.

"The Probashi Bakery in the area was fined for a number of irregularities including producing bakery items in dirty environment; using burnt and black palm oil; using old sugar juice in the bakery items, and not attaching manufacturing as well as expiring dates to the products' packets," said Executive Magistrate of Chittagong District Administration Mohammad Ruhul Amin, who led the court.

The court also destroyed some 35kg of adulterated ingredients by throwing them in drains.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Attorney General Delwar Hossain Samaddar died of brain hemorrhage at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University yesterday. He was 53.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj yesterday afternoon.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra



Freedom fighter Iman Ali died of cardiac arrest in Bagra village in Sherpur upazila of Bogra yesterday morning. He was 69.

He was the assistant commander of Muktiyoddha Sangsad Sherpur upazila unit. He was buried with state honour at his family graveyard.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha



Rekha Kabir, former president of district Mahila Awami League, died of cardiac arrest at Gaibandha Hospital early yesterday. She was 72.

She was the wife of former lawmaker late Shah Jahangir Kabir. She was buried in Gaibandha municipal graveyard.



Diploma-in-fisheries graduates form a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday, demanding that the field level posts for class II and III staff be fixed for them at the Department of Fisheries. PHOTO: STAR