



Do not let renovations alter historic sites' originality

Hasina directs authorities; tells them to be selective as well

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Stating that the authorities concerned have been destroying the original state of historical sites during renovations, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the cultural affairs ministry to be selective and to definitely refrain from making alterations while preserving antiquities.

The directive came during an unscheduled discussion at a cabinet meeting in Bangladesh Secretariat, two ministers told The Daily Star afterwards.

The ministry gave a PowerPoint presentation on some historical sites including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's ancestral home in Tungipara.

Hasina noted the renovation-induced loss of aesthetic appeal in most, including a 15th century Sixty Dome Mosque in Bagerhat and the 19th century home of Bangabandhu, and directed restoring those to their original state and bringing a list of the country's historical sites to her shortly.

On being selective, she said Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall and Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University, instead of being preserved as antiquities like Curzon Hall, should be turned into high rises to alleviate sufferings of students facing accommodation problems. "No structure should be underutilised in the name of heritage," she said.

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Law enforcers intercept a procession of unemployed diploma nurses yesterday in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club and try to snatch their banner away, which was demanding recruitment based on merits and seniority. Sparked by a Bangladesh Public Service Commission circular seeking to recruit 3,616 senior nurses through exams, the diploma nurses have been demonstrating since April 4 to press home their demands. Mentioning Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's previous announcement on recruiting 10,000 nurses, the demonstrators claim that many of them could not apply in the last 3 recruitment phases due to the previous system's seniority clause and now it will be unjust if they are to compete with juniors.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Violence undermining women's successes

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad's 46th anniversary programme told; the rights body awards 24 women for their contributions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the progress of women in different fields, violence against them continues to undermine the success, speakers told Bangladesh Mahila Parishad's 46th anniversary programme yesterday.

The chief guest, Prof Emeritus Anisuzzaman, said he felt that compared to any other time, violence against women had increased both in numbers and nature.

Criticising the police ban on outdoor programmes after 5:00pm on Pahela Baishakh, Anisuzzaman said, "Those who are reducing the programme time mentioning security reasons, what certainty is there that

some other day they won't ask women to stay at home for security reasons?"

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, which has been working for women's rights since 1970, celebrated its anniversary by awarding 28 women from different fields.

The programme was held at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital.

Two paratroopers of Bangladesh Army, four police officials, first female train operator, two film-makers, two women working in information technology, two artists, two women entrepreneurs, two sportswomen, two disability rights activists, and nine journalists, including Tamanna Khan, senior reporter of The Daily Star, was

awarded for their work in their respective fields.

Since 2007, as part of its anniversary celebration, BMP has been recognising women's works in different socio-economic and cultural fields.

Special guest Norwegian Ambassador Merete Lundemo said the awardees would inspire other women to come out and work for gender equality, women's rights and empowerment.

Referring to the 46th anniversary theme "Equal rights on property and resources is the pre-requisite for women empowerment and sustainable development", BMP President Ayesha Khanom said the traditional

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Laundry room asst of DU hall jailed for sexual harassment

JnU teacher suspended for same reason

CITY DESK

A laundry assistant of a dormitory of Dhaka University was sentenced to two years' imprisonment yesterday and a teacher of Jagannath University was suspended for allegedly sexually harassing female students.

The authorities of JnU took the action against Mir Mosharraf Hossain, assistant professor of the Mass Communication and Journalism Department of the university, after the allegations were primarily proved against him, said a UNB report.

Sources at the JnU administration said eight female students of the department lodged separate complaints against the teacher to the university authorities. Later, a five-member probe committee was formed which submitted its report to the vice-chancellor on April 12.

Meanwhile, DU Proctor (acting) AM Amzad said Mohammad Ali was working as an assistant for a week at the laundry of Sofia Kamal hall without permission of the hall authority. Around 9:30pm, Ali sexually harassed a student when she went to the laundry. Later, he harassed another

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ASK worried over Shafik Rehman's arrest

Top cop disapproves of discussion about it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday expressed deep concern over the arrest and remand of senior journalist Shafik Rehman.

If the law enforcers had specific evidence of crimes against him, they could have arrested him abiding by an arrest warrant from a court, reads a statement of the rights body.

"We think the way the law enforcers arrested him created confusion in the people's psyche. And, we hope the activities carried out by them should not make people think that the government is trying to suppress the voice of opposition," it added.

A Dhaka court on Saturday placed Rehman, also a pro-BNP intellectual, on a five-day remand in a case for alleged attempts to abduct and murder the prime minister's son Sajeeb Wazed Joy, hours after detectives arrested him in his house in the capital.

Meanwhile, Inspector

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Goyeshwar slams BNP for not observing Ilias' disappearance anniversary

Rizvi alleges he is in govt's hands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP standing committee member Goyeshwar Chandra Roy yesterday strongly criticised the party's high-ups for not holding any programme marking the fourth anniversary of disappearance of its leader M Ilias Ali, and for urging the government to trace him out.

"Why does BNP fear to remember its missing leader Ilias Ali? He went missing as a BNP leader, not as a man of Sylhet," said Goyeshwar at a discussion organised by Sylhet Division Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Forum at the

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Members of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad light floating candles at the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh in the capital yesterday, celebrating its 46th anniversary.

PHOTO: STAR

UN experts stress humane approach to drug control

Express concern about excessive punitive actions

UNB, Dhaka

Ahead of the UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS), a group of United Nations human rights experts have called upon states to use the occasion to integrate their human rights obligations in the international drug control regime.

"We'll continue to pay attention to the intersection of drug policy and human rights within the scope of their respective mandates," the experts said in a statement.

The experts are Juan E Méndez, UN special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; Christof Heyns, UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Seong-Phil Hong, chair-rapporteur of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Dainius Pūras, special rapporteur on the right of everyone to

the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, and Benyam Dawit Mezmur, chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

They urged member states to make bold commitments and ensure that the promotion and protection of human rights is central to the development of the 2019 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on Drugs.

The UNGASS takes place in New York on April 19-21, according to a message received from Geneva yesterday.

To adequately address the drug problem, states must protect, respect, and fulfil the right to health of the population by committing maximum available resources to ensure access to affordable and quality health services, the experts said.

This includes access to essential medicines, palliative care, comprehensive drug prevention and education,

drug treatment, and harm reduction, they mentioned.

The experts are concerned that the current international drug control regime remains excessively punitive, as most drug control policies at the national level are based on criminalisation, incarceration, and over-investment in law enforcement, which have proven to be serious barriers in the protection and fulfilment of human rights.

Such approaches have led to over-burdened criminal justice and prison systems where standards of care and living create an environment where torture and ill-treatment are more likely to happen, the experts observed.

Prevention is an important part of addressing drug use among children, but it must be pursued through evidence-based interventions as well as accurate and objective educational programmes and information campaigns, they said.

50 tonnes of Hilsa fry seized in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court of the Chittagong district administration seized around 50 tonnes of Hilsa fry and detained 15 fishermen from a vessel in the Karnaphuli river yesterday.

The court conducted the drive near Old Customs Ghat area of Sadarghat Police Station and found hilsha fries below 10-inch length from the vessel Crescent-4.

Deputy Commissioner Mesbah Uddin would distribute the fishes to the poor, said Executive Magistrate Abdullah Al Mansur, who led the drive. A team of Rab-7 assisted the court.

DNCC opens two new public toilets

More in pipeline, says Mayor Annisul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) yesterday opened two modern public toilets at Tejgaon Satrasta T&T Gate and Hazi Moron Ali Road to ensure healthcare of the city dwellers.

DNCC Mayor Annisul Huq at the inauguration said they will construct another 14 shortly, and to construct more they are looking for lands. He said four have already been set up and they have plans to construct 86 more. Annisul said they are also trying to construct toilets at the filling stations but the owners are not responding properly.

The public toilets are being constructed with the financial and technical assistance of H&M Conscious Foundation and WaterAid Bangladesh.

Annisul also urged ward councilors to

manage land to build these facilities as WaterAid is willing to provide more fund. These female and disable friendly facilities are equipped with separate chambers for male and female, lockers, shower and safe drinking water facilities, 24x7 electricity and CCTV cameras, and professional cleaners and female caretakers.

Johan Frisell, Swedish ambassador in Dhaka, said such types of toilets are needed to ensure public health, gender equity and safety, and beautification of the city.

Taksim A Khan, managing director of Wasa, said, "Experience from Gabtali public toilet indicates it will be a sustainable system. We just have to ensure proper management." Therese Mahon, head of region of WaterAid, and Dr Md Khairul Islam, country representative, also spoke.

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