



Sarah Begum Kobori, legendary actress of silver screen, receives Lifetime Achievement Award 2016 from the Managing Director of Square Toiletries Anjan Chowdhury Pintu at the Meril-Prothom Alo Award ceremony, held at Bangabandhu International Conference Center yesterday. Prothom Alo Editor Matur Rahman and veteran cultural personality Hasan Imam standing on her right.

PHOTO: STAR

CTG BUILDINGS TILTED IN EARTHQUAKE

## Experts suggest vulnerability study

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, Ctg  
Experts of a CDA probe committee have recommended that a three-storey building on Jubilee Road in Chittagong city, which tilted following the April 13 earthquake, be demolished.

Besides, they suggested that the owners of 11 other buildings that tilted due to the earthquake have seismic vulnerability assessments of their buildings done by the Bureau of Research, Testing and Consultation (BRTC) of Cuet or Buet.

The expenditure for demolishing the three-storey building will have to be borne by its owner. Also, the owners of the other affected buildings will have to bear the cost for the seismic vulnerability tests, the experts said in their report.

A five-member probe committee, led by Prof Jahangir Alam, former vice-chancellor of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), was formed following the earthquake to determine the probable risk and liveability of the tilted buildings.

The committee submitted its report to CDA Chairman Abdus Salam on

Wednesday. The committee in its report also recommended that owners of the 11 tilted buildings submit the "Seismic Vulnerability Assessment Report" to the probe committee within 15 days of getting notices from the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) in this regard, sources said.

Steps could be taken to demolish the "unapproved part" of seven buildings located in Halishahar, Chandgaon, Aturar Depot, GEC and Wasa High Level Road areas, the report said.

The committee also suggested that different floors of those buildings be vacated and sealed off until further instructions.

Shahinul Islam Khan, member secretary of the committee, on Thursday said they submitted the report to the CDA chairman.

Contacted, Salam told this correspondent that he would talk about this on Monday.

More than 60 people were slightly injured, mostly while rushing out of buildings in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet, after a 6.9 magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar and jolted parts of Bangladesh on April 13.

The tremor was felt at 7:55pm in Bangladesh and its epicentre in Myanmar was 420km east of Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Probe on right track Home boss about twin murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the investigation into the Kalabagan double murder was on the right track.

He said reporters would be briefed on the updates within a few days.

"You have already read in newspapers about the detention of three people," he said while replying to queries from a group of journalists at his Dhanmondi home in the capital.

He did not elaborate any further. Xulhaz Mannan, a USAID staff and also editor of Roopbaan, the country's only known magazine for the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community, and his friend Mahbub Tonoy were killed inside Xulhaz's flat in Kalabagan on April 25.

The home minister claimed that they had already arrested several of the murderers of bloggers and put them on trial. The other killers would be held soon, he said.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia yesterday told

The Daily Star that he would have meetings with the officials investigating the murder cases and discuss the probe progress with them.

Law Minister Anisul Huq, at a programme in the city, said the government was not feeling any pressure after the US expressed its concerns over the murders in Kalabagan.

"They [US] will certainly raise their concerns, but I will not term it pressure [for us]. We have been doing our job properly," he said after the programme.

Since February 2013, five secular online activists and a publisher were hacked to death with sharp weapons in Bangladesh.

Bloggers Avijit Roy, Niloy Neel, Ananta Bijoy Das, Oyasiquar Rahman Babu, and Jagriti Prokashoni owner Faisal Arefin Dipan, publisher of Avijit's books, were murdered

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Compensation hard to ensure

FROM PAGE 1

amount was never given to a rape victim in India and that too awarded to a foreigner.

In numerous cases, Indian High Courts in different states and the Supreme Court have ordered the state governments concerned to pay compensations to rape victims for their failure to protect their dignity.

In India, the compensation process is independent of the trial process.

In Bangladesh the situation is different than that of countries like the UK and the USA. The government of Bangladesh does not need to pay compensation to a rape victim for its failure to protect the victim's fundamental rights as a woman.

"As far as I know, there is no such case in which the government has compensated the rape victim," said advocate Fahmida Akhtar, case manger of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, an organisation that works for women who have been victims of sexual violence and abuse.

Asked, Zi Khan Panna, a Supreme Court lawyer, says they do not need to pray to the court seeking compensation from the state in sexual violence case as the offenders are made to pay compensation, if necessary.

"The court certainly will order the state to compensate the victims if the situation arises," he told The Daily Star.

Advocate Fahmida Akhtar says special tribunals dealing with offences against women and children, in some cases, have ordered the accused to compensate their victims.

"But the path to the compensation is long, as the accused filed appeals with the higher courts against the tribunal's orders. Disposal of the appeals takes a long time," she told The Daily Star.

Eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik says many countries compensate rape victims. Bangladesh should also take responsibility for compensating the rape victims, he added.

"Jurisprudence in this regard should evolve," he told The Daily Star referring to the practice in India.

The Supreme Court, in the State vs. Md. Moinul Haque and Others case in 2000, emphasised the need for compensating the victims for their rehabilitation.

It, however, observed that victims of rape should be compensated by giving them half of the property of the rapists

should be given to the victims to rehabilitate them.

At present, the Woman and Child Oppression Prevention Act 2000 empowers tribunals set up under this law to hold trial of the sexual crimes against women and children for compensating the victims.

As per (The law says, the tribunal may impose any monetary fine on convicted persons and order the district collector to sell the confiscate the convicted person's movable and immovable assets and sell them on auction. Then the collector will deposit the money to with the tribunal that will award the money to the victim as compensation.

But the completion of the process may take a long time if the convicted person files an appeal.

So, there is no scope for a sex crime victim to get any compensation before the conclusion of her case.

### PRACTICE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

A rape victim in UK is entitled to get compensation from the government. To provide the compensations to blameless victims of violent crimes including rape, the government has set up Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority--CICA.

People who have been physically or mentally injured can apply to the CICA for compensation ranging from £1,000 to £500,000.

A victim of sexual assault or rape has a right to claim compensation. The CICA in its official website says rape is a horrendous experience to endure and it can have a life long physical and psychological effect on the victim - although compensation will never put things right or reverse what has happened it can still come as invaluable financial help for treatment and counselling should you need it. Claiming compensation can help a rape victim gain back control and closure, it states.

In the United States, rape is generally prosecuted as a crime at the state level. U.S. The principal victim compensation programs for rape victims are found at the state level. However, the most significant victim compensation programs at the state level are funded by the federal Crime Victims Fund, which was established by the federal Victims of Crime Act of 1984.

A rape victim in Hong Kong is also entitled to get compensation from the state under the Criminal and Law

Enforcement Injuries Compensation Scheme.

Under the Crime Victim Protection Act, a rape victim in Taiwan, a rape victim and victims of sexual assault crimes and family members of deceased victims get compensation.

### INDIAN JUDICIARY SET EXAMPLES

In March, 2014, India's Supreme Court has ordered the West Bengal government to pay 5 lakh rupees to a tribal woman who was gang-raped in January on orders of village elders.

The judges said the state had failed to protect the victim's fundamental rights as a woman.

"No compensation can be adequate nor can it be of any respite for the victim but as the State has failed in protecting such serious violation of a victim's fundamental right, the State is duty bound to provide compensation, which may help in the victim's rehabilitation," it stated.

In the latest case, in February this year, the Supreme Court directed all states and Union Territories to formulate a uniform scheme to provide compensation to the victims or dependents who have suffered loss as a result of such crime.

"Indisputable, no amount of money can restore the dignity and confidence that the accused took away from the victim. No amount of money can erase the trauma and grief the victim suffers. But this aid can be crucial in the aftermath of the crime," said a SC bench headed by Justice MY Eqbal.

In this case, the court ordered the Chhattishgarh government to grant a compensation of Rs 8,000 per month to an 18-year old blind girl who was subjected to sexual violence.

The SC also refused to stay the orders of Chhattishgarh High Court in which the convict was sentenced to seven years of rigorous imprisonment.

The trial court awarded him the accused seven year a jail sentence of seven years for raping a 18-year-old the blind and illiterate girl on the false promise of marriage. The order was upheld by the Chhattishgarh High Court.

The apex court said the states should consider and formulate programmes for such victims in the light of the scheme framed in Goa which provides compensation of up to Rs 10 lakh.

## DEMOCRACY MEETING

# India denies visas to China dissidents

REUTERS, New Delhi

India has declined to issue visas to two Chinese activists hoping to attend a conference on promoting democracy, days after it revoked a visa for an exiled ethnic Uighur leader who China says backs militant violence.

Lu Jinghua, a US-based dissident, and Ray Wong, a pro-democracy activist, had applied for Indian visas to attend the meeting this week in the northern hill town of Dharamsala, the base of the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

India rejects accusations that it is caving into Chinese pressure to stop dissidents travelling to the country.

On Monday, India said it had cancelled a tourist visa it had granted to exiled Uighur leader Dolkun Isa, who was due to attend the same conference.

China blames unrest that has killed hundreds of people in its far western region of Xinjiang on Uighur militants looking to establish an independent state for the mostly Muslim Uighur minority.

Some Uighur activists says government restrictions on human rights fuels discontent, not radical Islam. China denies violating human rights.

A senior Indian government official said there were valid reasons for the denial of visas to the two Chinese activists.

## Late rush overwhelms

FROM PAGE 1

"We are facing a rush of customers," said Ekram Kabir, vice president for communications and corporate responsibility at Robi.

A large number of them went back, finding the re-registration process slow, he said.

Ekram said they hoped to re-register at least five lakh SIMs from yesterday morning to noon but could re-register only 3.5 lakh.

Asked, Brig Gen Sultanuzzaman Md Saleh Uddin, director general of Election Commission's NID wing, said they received complaints from mobile operators that the NID server was down, but they found no problem in the server.

"One of our teams is working with the operators, and if any problem arises, it will solve that," he said.

Tarana also ruled out the mobile operators' complaints about the NID database problem.

Talking to reporters after visiting a Grameenphone centre in the city, the state minister said she went to the NID database centre at the Election Commission around 4:00pm and found no problem there.

She expressed dissatisfaction with "the slow pace of the re-registration process".

While visiting customer care points in the capital and Narayanganj, she asked mobile users whether the deadline for re-registration should be extended. And most of them spoke in favour of an extension.

"We are very respectful of the wishes of the general people, and we will not do anything that will cause sufferings for them."

"What I can say is that a cut-off date should be there and no process can run for an indefinite period."

"But at the same time, we need to think about public sufferings," Tarana said in response to a query on deadline extension.

Of the 13.09 crore active SIMs, 8.38 crore had been re-registered as of Thursday.

Mobile operators launched the re-registration process on December 16 last year.

Last week, three mobile operators -- Grameenphone, Banglalink and Robi - sought time extension for completing the process.

## BNP gets DMP nod to hold May Day rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP has got permission from the Dhaka Metropolitan Police to hold a rally at the city's Suhrawardy Udyan tomorrow.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed yesterday at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office said that they got the permission on Thursday for the rally to be held to mark May Day.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address the rally as the chief guest.

Party insiders said the BNP high-ups have taken all-out efforts to make the rally a success.

The rally will be organised by the Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, labour wing of BNP. Its leaders have already said the rally would be the biggest gathering of its kind in recent times.

## Businesses hit hard

FROM PAGE 1

industry owners, including Abul Khair Group, Meghna Group, TK Group, Bashundhara, Akij Group and Premier Cement, have managed to resume unloading and transporting from some 26 mother vessels on a small scale with their own lighter and cargo vessels.

Industry owners have only 200 cargo vessels while three organisations of cargo vessel owners have some 3,000. Power and cement productions have already been hit by the stalemate.

State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid in a Facebook post on Wednesday said the non-operation of water vessels was hampering country-wide supply of fuel oil, affecting electricity generation at oil-based power plants.

According to Cement Manufacturers' Association, production in at least 10 cement factories remains fully or partially suspended.

For example, production at Premier Cement factory with a daily capacity of 8,000 tonnes remained completely

halted till April 26.

Amirul Hoque, managing director of Premier Cement Mills Limited, said they had to count \$10,000 in daily demurrage for each of their three vessels stuck at the anchorage.

"On top of that, we lost market share as our supply chain was affected due to the complete suspension of production for those six days. Who is going to pay for the loss...?"

The factory resumed partial production on April 27 by transporting raw materials with their own small vessels.

**WAGE HIKE DEBATE**  
In 2009, the lowest wage for the transport workers was fixed at Tk 3,000. Following workers' strike in 2013, it was raised by 20 percent to Tk 4,100.

On April 20, Bangladesh Water Transport Workers Federation called the latest strike demanding a minimum monthly wage of Tk 10,000 and also an increase in overtime pay, festival bonus and other benefits.

Following a meeting between work-

ers, owners and ministry representatives on April 26, the workers called off their strike as the ministry proposed to fix Tk 9,000 in minimum wages.

The next day, cargo vessel owners stopped operating their vessels in protest against the hike.

Khorshed Alam, senior-vice president of Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association, said after the 2009 hike, the next raise was due in 2014. But in 2013, workers forced owners to give a 20 percent increase.

Now they demand a 150 percent hike, which is illogical and impossible for the owners to pay, he added.

"In the last three years, fuel cost has been increased thrice though the vessel fare was not hiked. Though we are not in a position to increase wage this year, we proposed for an increase but the ministry favoured the workers and put pressure on us," he added.

Terminating the owners' decision not to operate vessels "whimsical," Chowdhury Ashiquil Alam, general

secretary of Bangladesh Water Transport Workers Federation, said workers' minimum wage of Tk 9,000 fixed by the ministry was still too little to cope.

"How can a worker do such a risky job without feeding himself? A worker needs at least Tk 3,500 a month for himself. Then how can he run the family with the rest of the money?" he said.

### MINISTRY STEP

The shipping ministry yesterday asked the Chittagong Port Authority chairman to sit with all stakeholders. The chairman is expected to hold a meeting to discuss this today, sources said.

Ministry Secretary Ashoke Madhab Roy told The Daily Star that they also sought help from Chittagong Chamber leaders in this regard.

He termed the vessel owners' opposition to the wage hike "illogical". "We negotiated to fix the minimum wage at Tk 9,000. This was logical because it is difficult for the workers to do their job with a pay lower than that," he added.

## Decision

FROM PAGE 16

and petrol by Tk 10 a litre from Tk 99 and Tk 86. The prices of diesel and kerosene were reduced by Tk 3 per litre from Tk 68.

Transport operators have been making excuses for not cutting fares in line with the reduced fuel prices, said leaders of Bangladesh Passengers Welfare Association (BPWA).

However, the operators previously hiked the fares whenever the government had increased fuel prices.

Almost all the buses on inter-district routes are run on diesel, while most of the intra-city buses in metropolitan cities are run on CNG, according to transport operators.

The BPWA has demanded the government revise the transport fares in line with the fuel price-cut.

Slashing of transport fares is the right of passengers as the prices of fuel have come down, it argued.