

# PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PEOPLE Lack of initiatives a barrier to ensuring proper facilities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lack of proper initiatives, monitoring and narrow mentality of a section of people are major barriers for ensuring proper facilities for physically challenged people, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

It is very tough for any such person, especially women, to go out alone as there are insufficient services for them, they observed.

The roundtable on "Accessibility Rights of Women with Disabilities" was organised by the Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

The speakers alleged that some buildings, including government ones, kept facilities, such as ramps, but the target group could not benefit as many of the ramps were narrow.

There is no ramp to board public buses, except for some Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) buses plying on long routes, said WDDF Executive Director Asharfun Nahar.

Moreover, there is no easy access facility in trains for people with special needs, she said while presenting a keynote paper.

She said the government has been taking different initiatives for physically challenged people and allocated Tk 100 crore in the 2016-2017 budget for them.

Rounak Jahan Usha, who is physically challenged, alleged that people like her faced negative attitudes from government officials, including those at the social welfare ministry, when they sought services.

She said able-bodied people grab seats reserved for people with disabilities in pub-

lic buses and there was none to ask them to leave the seat.

Tarana Halim, state minister for posts, telecommunications and information technology, said physically challenged people would easily get proper services if monitoring can be ensured. She also blamed corruption for the situation.

"I have decided to send a letter to BTRC (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission) as it will give directives to the mobile phone operator companies so that they upload software of international standard easily accessible by all," said Tarana.

She said she would also send letters to other ministries and government offices for this.

Kamal Krishna Bhattacharyya, additional secretary to the Ministry of Railways, said as there were two types of railways, metre and broad gauge, it was tough for them to provide easy access facilities for physically challenged people.

Architect Iqbal Habib said if the government asked the city corporations and Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha to ensure accessibility in all buildings in the capital, it is possible to create an accessible-friendly city within six months.

Khandakar Atiar Rahman, additional secretary to the Ministry of Social Welfare, expressed dismay over the allegations centring government offices. He said he would talk with officials.

Md Abdul Malek, additional secretary to the Ministry of Road, Transport and Bridges, architect Dr Abu Sayeed M Ahmed and Jahidul Islam, programme associate of CBM International, also spoke at the discussion.



A seminar on "Accessibility Rights of Women with Disabilities", organised by the Women with Disabilities Development Foundation, at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Death anniversary CITY DESK

Tomorrow is the sixth death anniversary of Kafiluddin Mahmood, former finance adviser to the caretaker government in 1991, says a press release.

A doa mahfil will be held at his ancestral home in Feni. Kafiluddin was also finance secretary, NBR chairman, alternate executive director of Asian Development Bank.

## Obituary CITY DESK

A K M Shoyeb, a member of Cadet College Club Ltd and an ex-cadet of Rangpur Cadet College, died on December 28. He was 49.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and two son, said a press release.

## Govt trying

FROM PAGE 3 that the government will give permission to hold the rally," he said.

Referring to killings, he said instead of arresting the real perpetrators, the government was blaming BNP for those criminal activities.

Fakhrul also criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's statement on ruling AL MP Liton's killing and demanded a fair and impartial investigation.

## HC asks govt

FROM PAGE 3 Krishna Debnath also ordered the prison authorities to submit the records of the cases against Swapan and Saded before it on January 19.

The court came up with the rule and order after Supreme Court lawyer Cumar Debul Dey told the court that the two prisoners had reportedly been suffering in jail with little progress of their trial proceedings.

He prayed to the court to pass necessary orders in this regard.

## Hearing deferred till Jan 12

FROM PAGE 3 statements of 32 prosecution witnesses afresh which is pending with the Chief Justice. So the hearing for placing her self-defence statements should be adjourned until the HC matter gets finalised.

Opposing the adjournment petition, Public Prosecutor Mosharrif Hossain Kajol told the court that there was no stay on

running the proceedings. After the hearing for over two hours, the judge granted the defence petition. On August 8, 2011, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the Zia Charitable Trust graft case with Tejgaon Police Station accusing four people, including Khaleda, of raising funds for the trust from unknown sources abusing power.

## Collapsed market continues

FROM PAGE 3 such a state that "anything could have caused it to cave in."

He also added that marketplaces and neighbourhoods of the city were frequently catching fire. "Our homes and workplaces need to be safe. Even if we have to sacrifice some short term business gains, we need to reform or abandon the places for the sake of greater gains."

Pictures of firefighters bringing out gas

cylinders from the rubble were handed out at the event.

"We have been going there every day, asking people to reduce weight on the building. We have been citing a Buet (Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology) report of the building and asking them to take their goods off the first floor of the building," he stressed.

Police formed a five-member probe body to submit a report within seven workdays.

## JU BCL men beat JCD leader

FROM PAGE 3 "Nabin tried to create unrest marking the January 5 [election], so some junior BCL men beat him up."

Proctor Prof Tapan Kumar Saha said, "Action will be taken after the victim files a complaint."

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