

Journalists for abolishing section 57

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent journalists yesterday urged the government to abolish section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology Act, reiterating that the section is a hindrance to freedom of expression and of the press.

They made the call in the capital's Jatiya Press Club during a discussion titled "Freedom of Press: Section 57 of ICT Act". South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) Bangladesh chapter organised the discussion.

They also urged all journalists to unite under a larger platform and wage a movement to press home their demand as the section of the ICT Act is being misused against journalists to serve the interest of vested quarters.

Reazuddin Ahmed, editor of English daily News Today, said repeated discussions took place in the past to press home the demand and the government is also aware of the issue.

The law minister had assured that the section would be eliminated from the act, "but we cannot be sure unless it is done," he added.

Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, chief executive officer and chief editor of Ekushey Television, said the government on one hand enacted Right to Information Act, and on the other hand, it introduced section 57 -- a stumbling block to freedom of press.

Daily Sangbad's Acting Editor Khandaker Muniruzzaman said the section has been enacted to pressurise journalists.

SAFMA Bangladesh chapter President Zahiduzzaman Faruque said journalists need be on the watch so the government cannot introduce the same provision of the section

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RECRUITMENT SCAM

Rokeya University ex-VC, deputy registrar land in jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A Rangpur court yesterday sent a former vice chancellor (VC) and an incumbent deputy registrar of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) to jail in a corruption case.

Former VC Prof Abdul Jalil Miah and Deputy Registrar Shahjahan Ali Mondal were sent to jail in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2013.

Humayun Kabir of Senior Special Judge Court of Rangpur rejected their bail petitions and directed police to send them to jail after they appeared before the court seeking bail.

The court also issued arrest warrants against three officials -- deputy directors ATM Golam Firoz (planning and development) and Khandakar Ashraf Alam (finance and accounts) and assistant registrar Morshedul Alam Rony -- for skipping yesterday's court hearing, said Mozahar Ali, ACC deputy director in Rangpur.

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ANTI-EXTREMISM CAMPAIGN

DU wins Facebook based challenge



The winning students of Dhaka University at the National Union Building in Washington DC.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University won a Facebook-based anti-extremism campaign competition.

The DU group "Think Twice, Act Wise", among four was named winner of the "Peer to Peer: Facebook Global Digital Challenge" yesterday in Washington in the USA, said a press release.

A total of 160 teams from 70 countries took part in the competition. The winning team was awarded USD \$5,000 as prize money.

The DU team campaigned for promoting tolerance and empathy through the development of critical thinking skills and extracurricular activities among the youths of Bangladesh.

"I still can't believe we made it," said Imran Ahsan, a masters student of Dhaka University's development studies and the team leader. "It was a great honour for our country."

A 12-member team, supervised by DU teacher Dr Asif Shahan, worked for creating tolerance among people since May this year. Six of them including the professor flew to USA on July 16 to participate in the final round of the competition.

American University of Nigeria came up runners up in the competition, followed by CEU Universidad San Pablo in Spain, and Xavier University of Philippines.

The challenge is one of the Facebook initiatives to counter online hate and extremism, organisers EdVenture Partners said in the release.

Student teams are challenged to counter the pervasiveness of hate and extremism on social media in ways that are credible and authentic to their peers and communities, it says.

Reduce pressure on Dhaka

Urges Brac, IGC roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Administrative decentralisation is necessary to reduce pressure on Dhaka and make the city liveable, said urban experts and economists at a roundtable yesterday.

Many people will move from Dhaka if they get different facilities -- including good educational institutions, healthcare services and employment opportunity in other districts, they said.

Addressing the programme, Prof AGM Mahbub of Dhaka University said, "Shift central offices from Dhaka and develop the district towns with all the facilities."

The roundtable, "Migration, Spatial Planning and Housing Pressure in Asia Mega Cities: Lessons for Dhaka", was jointly

organised by International Growth Centre (IGC), A2I project under PMO and Brac University at the Brac centre.

Prof Tony Venables, CBE of the University of Oxford, said 44 percent of the country's formal employments is in greater Dhaka, which is only one percent of the country's territory. Thirty-six percent of the country's urban population also lives in Dhaka, he said.

Bangladesh experienced faster urbanisation than South Asia as a whole between 2000 and 2010, he said, adding that according to the prediction, it will be 45 percent in 2030 and 55 percent in 2050.

Tony also said 45,000 people live in per square kilometre in Dhaka.

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Housewife faces remand for 'torture of domestic help'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police on Wednesday night arrested a housewife at her residence in the capital's Dhanmondi area on charge of torturing a 13-year-old house help.

Moutushy Shabnam Swapna, 36, tortured the girl, Meruna, for over a year over mistakes and delay in doing household chores, reads the statement of a case filed by the victim's father Abul Hashem with Dhanmondi Police Station on the same night.

Numerous cuts are still visible in the waist, back and other parts of the girl's body. The middle finger of her right hand has been broken due to torture, he added.

On receiving the complaint, police arrested Swapna and sent her to the court yesterday, seeking a five-day remand, said Parvez Islam, inspector (investigation) of the police station.

"We found old injury marks in the victim's body," he said.

Police also took the victim to the court after she

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