

Khaleda gets six-month interim bail

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted six-month interim bail to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the Cumilla murder case. The bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice SM Mozibur Rahman passed the bail order after hearing a petition in this regard.

Eight persons died and 25 others were injured when a bus was torched at Jogmohanpur area under Choudhagram upazila in Cumilla on February 3, 2015, during anti-government agitations by the BNP-led alliance.

Khaleda's lawyer moved a petition before the HC on February 27, seeking bail for her in the case, after a Cumilla court rejected her bail on February 4.

AJ Mohammad Ali stood for Khaleda while Attorney General Mahbubey Alam represented the state.



BNP leaders and activists form a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday, demanding proper treatment of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

PHOTO: STAR

Khaleda has the right to proper treatment like Quader: Abbas

BNP vows movement for party chief's release

UNB, Dhaka

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the party will "force the government" through street protests to release their Chairperson Khaleda Zia from jail.

Speaking at a human chain, he also alleged that the government is not willing to ensure proper treatment of Khaleda at any specialised private hospital out of political vengeance.

"There's no alternative to freeing Khaleda Zia for restoring democracy. Time has come for us to strengthen our organisation and forge a strong unity of people. We'll force the government to release our leader through waging an unstoppable movement," Fakhru said.

BNP leaders and activists formed the human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding Khaleda's release and her proper treatment.

Stating that Khaleda is very ill, Fakhru said availing treatment is her basic and constitutional right. "But she is being deprived of it. We have been demanding she be provided treatment at any specialised hospital, but the government is not paying heed to it out of fear."

"They've kept her in jail only because of their political vengeance," he said.

Amid the party's concerns over Khaleda's illness, a BNP

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88pc women face derogatory comments outside home

Speakers call for promoting gender-sensitive language

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In everyday language, many abusive and swear words are used demeaning womanhood.

Women become subject of verbal abuse in arguments and quarrels and it is not uncommon that one hurls words humiliating the other's mother or sister in such a situation.

Unfortunately, this practice is a norm in society, as people lack awareness.

Speakers expressed the views at a dialogue yesterday, saying such use of abusive words only pushes women backward and limits their surroundings.

Promoting gender sensitive language in every space is required to overcome the situation, they stressed.

The dialogue session titled "Women Shackled by Words" was part of a programme arranged by ActionAid Bangladesh at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in Dhaka, prior to International Women's Day tomorrow.

Apart from the dialogue, the programme included an exhibition "exploring trends in use of negative and abusive languages towards women", and a theatrical performance depicting women's feelings regarding such words.

Referring to a baseline survey conducted by ActionAid in 2014, Kashfia Feroz, its manager for Women's Rights and Gender Equity, said country's 88 percent women in Bangladesh face derogatory comments outside home.

Abusive languages and words play a key role during violence and torture against women and create tremendous pressure on their psychology, she said.

Moderating the dialogue, ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said people should be careful with their choice of words as words turn abusive because of their connotation.

She stressed on formulating codes of conduct against such malpractice.

As use of comments demeaning

ONLINE SEXUAL HARASSMENT Laws exist but not implemented, speakers say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To prevent online sexual harassment of women, existing laws need to be strictly implemented, speakers said at a programme yesterday marking International Women's Day (March 8).

They also said that people need to be more aware regarding the use of online platforms and victims of sexual harassment should never be blamed.

The programme was jointly organised by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) and embassies of Denmark, Sweden and Norway at the VIP Lounge of Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Speaking as a guest, Barrister Sara Hossain said that a victim of sexual harassment does not feel encouraged to disclose such incident, not even to her friends, as the existing laws are not as effective as they should be.

"We have laws but they are not properly implemented," she said, while talking about online sexual harassment.

Citing examples, she said that in many cases victims are

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Women's participation in workforce increasing

Says Sadeka Halim at Gender Fest



From left, Dr Sanzida Akhtar, Dr Sadeka Halim, Prof Dr Nasreen Ahmad, Education Minister Dipu Moni, Shaheen Anam, Kathlyn Bryant and Dr Najma Chowdhury at DWGS Gender Fest yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 167 women aged between 11 and 29 came to Dhaka against every 100 men for work in 2016, while the number was 166 for Chattogram.

"This indicates female migration within the country is increasing day by day, as is their participation in workforce," said Prof Sadeka Halim, dean of Dhaka University's Faculty of Social Sciences, citing a United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) study revealed in 2016.

She was presenting a keynote yesterday at the inaugural session of the two-day long "Gender Fest 2019" marking International Woman's Day.

Department of Women and Gender Studies (DWGS) of DU organised the event.

Expressing concerns over acceleration of gender-based violence (GBV), speakers at the programme said preventive measures should be strengthened in parallel to ensuring equal access for women everywhere.

In her keynote, Prof Halim said, "Some 1.62 crore women out of 5.41 crore-strong workforce are working in different sectors

across the country."

The former information commissioner also said equal rights for women in property were revoked by amending the "National Women Development Policy 1997" in 2007, and it is still not addressed due to "political reasons".

Speakers said the current women's development situation in Bangladesh is satisfactory, but there are still some gaps.

Speaking as chief guest, Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni said, "It is clear that there is discrimination of power [among men and women] across the globe... Women become the victim of same type of violence worldwide."

Criticising previous governments for revoking women's equal right to property, she said, "It has now become difficult to return to National Women Development Policy 1997 for us."

"Women have reached a position that was unthinkable 20 years ago. But violence towards women and children is still a matter of disappointment," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation.

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Gonoforum's Mokabbir not taking oath today

Mansur stays on schedule

UNB, Dhaka

Gonoforum's MP-elect Mokabbir Khan (Sylhet-2) is not going to take oath today to join the 11th parliament due to an "unavoidable reason".

However, the party's other MP-elect, Sultan Mohammad Mansur (Moulvibazar-2) will be sworn in at 11am as per the schedule fixed by Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

"Mokabbir Khan, who was elected MP from Sylhet-2 with Gonoforum's

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The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam and Shwapno's Executive Director Sabbir Hasan Nasir signed a six-month agreement yesterday with an aim to educate readers on vegetables. The initiative, titled "Eat Healthy" will feature the nutritional value and cultivation process of various vegetables from the southern region. It will also include information on the farmers who grow the vegetables. Readers can know more about what they are consuming, so that they can maintain a healthy lifestyle.

PHOTO: STAR

DU CSU Polls Code of conduct violations galore

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League, the pro-Awami League student organisation, yet again violated the code of conduct for Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) and hall union polls slated for March 11.

They held a projection meeting yesterday on a stage set up at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla and announced their manifesto at the event.

As per Section 7 of code of conduct, any candidate or any student organisation on their behalf cannot construct any gate, circle office, camp, pandal or set up any stage and illuminate any infrastructure.

But assistant general secretary nominee from BCL panel, Saddam Hussain, claimed it was not a stage.

"It was a platform. It would be a bit higher if it were a stage. We held the meeting with permission from the chief returning officer," he said.

Only the BCL-majority panel, Sammilito Shikharthi Sangsad, announced a full-fledged panel for the Ducusu (25 posts) and hall union (13 posts in each) polls. Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, leftist students' organisations and the quota reformists could not announce full-fledged panels for the hall union polls.

As BCL President Rezwanaul Haque Chowdhury officially introduced their panel members and sought vote for them, literature affairs secretary contender Mazharul Kabir Shoyon alleged that the quota reformists are trying to implement their political agenda through participating in the polls.

"They (quota reform activists) had earlier said they would dissolve their platform once their demands are realised, but they did not do that," Mazharul added.

During electioneering, one cannot give any provocative speech that defames any person or organisation, is gender insensitive, or hurts religious belief. Spreading rumour is also prohibited.

GS contender of the panel, Golam Rabbani, presented their manifesto in which they pledged to

formulate a complete outline of a residential university, allocate seats to students from first year, reconsider the decision of affiliating seven colleges of Dhaka with the university, and run evening courses.

Vice president contender of BCL, Rezwanaul Haque, campaigned on Tuesday with outsiders, which is also a violation of Section 4(Ga) of the code of conduct.

Violating Section 6(Ka) and (Kha) of the code, posters of Tanbir Hasan Shaikat, a member nominee from BCL, were put up on the walls of Zahurul Haq Hall and Sir AF Rahman Hall.

Some Chhatra League men from different halls were also seen electioneering in the classrooms of Business Studies faculty. Campaigning inside classrooms is not allowed, reads Section 5(Cha) of the code of conduct.

Aspirants from other student organisations also allegedly violated electoral code of conduct during electioneering.

Witnesses said a colourful procession, accompanied by musical instruments, was brought out on the campus led by Liton Nandi, general secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Union and candidate for the post of vice president, on Tuesday.

According to the Section 3(Ka), any competent contender or others on behalf of the candidate cannot bring out a rally, showdown or procession using vehicle, motorcycle, rickshaw, elephant or band party while conducting electioneering.

Rejecting the allegation, Liton said, "It was not a band party. It was our musical procession. One of our activists used drums as part of the procession."

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and quota reformists also allegedly violated Section 4(Ga) of the electoral code of conduct as non-students joined their election campaign.

Asked about the allegations, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani said they would take action upon receiving complaint containing valid proof.

Salman gives final warning to traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salman F Rahman yesterday warned businessmen of complete eviction from Old Dhaka if fire again breaks out in the area due to their failure in taking preventive measures during the interim period of relocating chemical warehouses and factories.

"If such an incident takes place again for whatever reason, we will not hold meetings with you. The government will not consider your loss. Your businesses there will be shut down completely," said Salman, private industry and investment adviser to the prime minister yesterday at a discussion.

"It may take four to six months for relocation. In the meantime, you [businessmen] will have to take some fire prevention measures and implement them immediately," he added.

Salman was addressing a discussion titled "Risky Chemical Business in Old Town: Opportunity, Duty and Prohibition" organised by Dhaka South City Corporation at Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

He said he will sit with all stakeholders and by two or three weeks they will prepare a roadmap for relocation of chemical factories and warehouses.

Termining the repetition of fire incidents in Old Town as a collective failure; he said these would not have happened had the recommendations given after Nimtoli blaze been implemented.

"After the Nimtoli fire in 2010, chemical business did not stop; rather it grew," he said.

DSCC Mayor Mohammad Sayeed Khokan said, "It is not acceptable that some innocent people will die for the profit of

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