

Need media support to fight fake news

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday called upon mainstream media houses to come forward and fight fake news, saying the job cannot be done successfully by the government alone.

"Alongside the government, mainstream media houses have important roles to play to this end. They have to produce objective reports and reach those to readers in quickest possible time so they do not rely on social media," he said.

The minister was addressing a symposium at the capital's Cosmos Centre.

Cosmos Foundation, the philanthropic wing of Cosmos Group, hosted the symposium on "Fake News and Hate Speech, Causes and Consequences: How It Subverts Our Democratic Systems".

It was part of a newly introduced programme titled "Distinguished Speakers Series".

Dan Shefet, an expert on European and information technology law, was the keynote speaker.

Addressing as the chief guest, Minister Anisul said, "Media houses have to come out of the tendency of hiding information or remaining silent.

We need to keep in mind where path to access the truth stops, fake news begins its journey."

He said the government has taken multiple measures to stop publishing and spreading of fake news, including formulation of the Digital Security Act and formation of cyber court.

He said in many countries including Bangladesh, Facebook and Twitter are used as primary sources of information for news reports. If that is done with responsibility and professionalism, chances of risk will minimise, he added.

The minister said new technology should be developed to tackle fake news.

He suggested users to think twice before sharing any web link on social media, saying even an unintentional share of fake news can lead to an untoward incident.

"If a person cannot identify fake news properly it would be wise for him or her to rely on a credible news media, which would also help reduce spread of fake news," said the minister.

Delivering his lecture on the topic, Dan Shefet said the type of fake news which is a real threat to democracy is the one close to the fact.

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A tangle of cables -- including electrical lines -- hangs dangerously low on a footpath in front of Mohammadpur Town Hall Market. Locals say these have been in this condition for weeks, not only obstructing foot-traffic but also posing risks.

DHAKA TODAY

DISCUSSION
Women's Rights are Workers' Rights
Organiser: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bangladesh
Venue: The Nordic Club
Time: 3pm

FOOD FESTIVAL
Dim Sum Festival
Venue: Chows, Plot 6, Rd19A, Block E, Banani
Time: 12:30pm

DANCE EVENT
Salsa Night
Venue: Cuppa Coffee Lounge
Time: 7pm

LECTURE
Universal Health Coverage for Primary Health Care
Venue: Krishibid Institution Bangladesh
Time: 10:15am

DIALOGUE
Women's Movement and Social Media
Organiser: Bangladesh Mahila Parishad
Venue: Sufia Kamal Bhaban
Time: 3:30pm

DANCE EVENT
Salsa Night
Venue: Cuppa Coffee Lounge
Time: 7pm

Development impossible without ensuring road safety: Ilias Kanchan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country will not see expected development if road safety cannot be ensured, road safety crusader Ilias Kanchan said yesterday.

"If the government takes necessary steps considering road accidents as number one challenge, then, I believe, road accident figure will come down. The country will be safe. Development will be accelerated," he said.

Ilias Kanchan, chairman of Nirapad Sarak Chai, said this at the 8th grand rally of the organisation at Mohanagar Natya Mancha in Gulistan. The theme of the programme was "If You Want Development; Ensure Road Safety."

The actor-turned-road safety cam-

paigner made the comments at a time when the country is witnessing increasing number of road accidents, making it one of the most talked about issues in the country.

According to police, 2,635 people were killed in 2,609 road crashes last year. At least 2,513 people had died in 2,562 accidents in 2017.

The figures are significantly lower than that of two road safety organisations, but even with these figures, it would be impossible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to halve the number of deaths on roads by next year, experts and road safety campaigners say.

Ilias said complete development is not possible without ensuring road

safety, and if road accidents cannot be brought down to 50 percent, then expected development is not possible.

Talking about a committee led by former shipping minister Shajahan Khan comprising transport workers leaders, and its 111-point recommendation to curb road accidents and bring discipline in road transport sector, Ilias said this is an opportunity for the government.

"Because, the committee is led by people who used to oppose enactment of rules and regulations... As they are leading the work, implementation [of the recommendations] will not face obstacles," Ilias, also a member of the committee, said.

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Emphasise modern sanitation in cities to achieve SDG

Speakers tell nat'l consultation

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a national consultation meeting yesterday urged the public and private stakeholders to work on technology-based sanitation system in cities to achieve SDG-6.2.

They also discussed the importance of reviewing and updating policies and strategies on water supply sanitation in light of SDG, and different issues on implementation of sanitation programme in urban areas and their sustainability.

They made the call at a meeting -- "City Wide Inclusive Sanitation (CWIS) in Bangladesh" at Spectra Convention Centre in the capital.

Sustainable Development Goal 6.2 is about achieving access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for

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Household waste is being dumped right by the highway in Tongi Bazar Bus Stand area on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, on the outskirts of the capital. Aside from the pollution, this has also narrowed the road and left pedestrians in risk from moving traffic. The photos were taken recently.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Free media essential for Bangladesh to meet full potential: UK minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UK Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Asia and Pacific Affairs) Mark Field said free media is essential for Bangladesh to meet its full potential.

The minister, exchanging views with senior journalists of Prothom Alo yesterday, laid emphasis on the importance of media freedom. He visited the Prothom Alo office on the second day of his visit to Bangladesh, where he was received by Matiur Rahman, editor of the leading Bangla daily.

Mark Field said media freedom featured high on the agenda of talks this time, his third visit to

Bangladesh. The UK, along with Canada, is organising an international media conference in London on July 10 and 11 this year.

While exchanging views, British High Commissioner Robert Dickson said media freedom was an important focus of Mark Field's visit.

Field said they were committed to media freedom, and particularly to the protection of journalists. He said last year some 80 journalists were killed, which was the worst year on record, and hundreds were either in prison or kidnapped and found themselves in great danger just for doing their day to day job. "We don't preach to other countries because we have



Mark Field

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Ensuring accessibility Dev not possible leaving behind people with disabilities: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Country's overall development will not be ensured if persons with disabilities are left behind, no matter what development project the government initiates, rights activists said at a discussion yesterday.

In almost every stage of society, a differently-abled person is deprived of rights. And if that person is a woman, she has to suffer more due to the existing social attitude towards her, they added.

Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF), an organisation of differently-abled women, organised the discussion on "Access to justice of women with disabilities" at The Daily Star Centre.

Sheepa Hafiza, executive director of Aino Salish Kendra (ASK), said the government's projection to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 will not be fulfilled if people with disabilities remain neglected.

The government should ensure equal access for people with disabilities to all

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