



Officers of Dhanmondi Model Police Station have left these cars -- seized as evidence of cases -- for months, possibly longer, on its premises. Despite there being designated dumping zones for these, many vehicles have been left on the footpaths in front of the police station, top right, and even on the adjacent Mirpur Road, bottom right. The photos were taken yesterday.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Form national child rights commission

Child Rights Advocacy Coalition demands to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child Rights Advocacy Coalition in Bangladesh yesterday demanded that the government promptly complete the procedure to form a child directorate and a national child rights commission that will work on child protection and prevention of child rights violation.

The child directorate will coordinate actions taken by different ministries for children, and the national commission will make government stakeholders accountable for their actions targeting children, said Shepa Hafiza, executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra, a member of the coalition, while reading out a statement at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club.

Since 2013, the 10-member coalition has been observing the progress in fulfilling the government's pledges to this end, for example the commitments made as a signatory of the United Nation Convention on Child Rights and under the child-focused Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The coalition expressed concern over the rising trend in violence against children in the country.

As many as 826 children suffered violence until July 20 this year, according to data compiled by ASK from nine national dailies.

The number of child rapes recorded over the time is 471, 15 of who were boys. Meanwhile, 224 were murdered.

There were also 76 incidents of torture by teachers. Twenty-seven children were sexually harassed by teachers.

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RISKY OLD HIGH COURT BUILDING Int'l Crimes Tribunal officials in constant fear of accident

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Although the old High Court buildings were declared "risky" more than a year ago, the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) and its Chief Prosecutor's Office have been operating their daily proceedings there, exposing hundreds of people to serious risk of accident.

A three-member committee of Public Works Department (PWD) had declared the buildings "risky" in March last year, but the department notified the matter to the tribunal's authorities only recently.

With the information coming to light, panic has gripped people working at the tribunal. A portion of plaster from the buildings' ceiling collapsed around 4pm yesterday, intensifying their fear.

"An accident may happen anytime. We are in continuous fear of life," a staffer told this correspondent yesterday, wishing anonymity.

More than 200 people are working at two blocks of the building complex regularly, and the number increases at the time of daily proceedings when any accused, their family members, witnesses, journalists and visitors go there.

The government set up ICT-1 in March 2010 and ICT-2 in March 2012 in the east block of the old High Court

building, and later allotted the west block to the chief prosecutor's office.

According to documents, the building -- opposite Curzon Hall of Dhaka University -- was constructed in early 20th century.

Portions of ceilings or false ceilings of two blocks of the building had collapsed at least six times since June 2012. Tribunal authorities and the Chief Prosecutor's Office wrote to the authorities on several occasions in this regard.

Law Minister Anisul Huq also visited the tribunal in July 2016 after a portion of false ceiling of Chief Prosecutor's Office collapsed, and said the first floor will be relocated and the repair work will be done thereafter. But nothing happened, two prosecutors said.

The law minister could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

PWD DECLARED THE BUILDING RISKY IN MARCH 2018

PWD formed a three-member committee after portion of the ceiling at the east block of the old High Court building collapsed on March 12 last year.

The committee -- led by Sohel Raman, superintendent engineer (Design Circle-1), in their report submitted on March 18, 2018 -- said

they found cracks on the wall of the building and several portions of plaster of ceilings and walls already collapsed.

Considering all aspects, the committee declared the building "risky". But the tribunal authorities did not know about the development, sources said. At that time, PWD repaired the damaged portion only.

"We had no idea about the 2018 report. We learnt about it [declaration as risky building] recently from a letter [of PWD]," Ali Hider, the tribunal's registrar and spokesperson, said.

On July 14, ICT-1 could not record testimonies of witnesses as a leaking ceiling damaged the computer network of the special court. On the same day, tribunal registrar Ali Hider wrote to the chief engineer of PWD to take steps to avoid a "possible accident", tribunal sources said.

The same day, several PWD engineers visited the tribunal and Khaled Hossain, superintendent engineer (Dhaka Public Works Circle-2), submitted a report to the additional chief engineer (Dhaka Metropolitan Zone) on July 16.

In his letter, Khaled mentioned about the opinion of the previous committee and recommended for retrofitting or restoration of the buildings.

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DEATH OF ABRAR Court accepts charges against four accused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted charges brought against four accused in a case filed over the death of Bangladesh University of Professionals student Abrar Ahmed Chowdhury in a road accident on March 19.

The charge-sheeted accused are Suprobhat Paribahan owner Nani Gopal Sarker, and three staffers of the bus that ran him over -- driver Sirajul Islam, conductor Yasin Arafat and helper Md Ibrahim.

They were charged for the death of Abrar and for murder attempt on college student Synthia Islam Mukta.

After scrutinising case dockets and other documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Debdas Chandra Adhikary yesterday accepted the charges.

The court also sent the case to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate for the next course of action.

On April 25, Investigation Officer Kazi Shariful Islam,

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Opportunities for youth could eliminate extremism

Speakers tell MJF's Sampreeti Utshab



PHOTO: STAR

State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel addresses the inaugural ceremony of the festival.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Creating widespread opportunities for the youth to show their potentials could eliminate extremism from society, speakers at a festival celebrating communal harmony said yesterday.

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) organised the two-day Sampreeti Utshab (harmony festival) at Bangabandhu International Conference Center, with an aim to battle radicalisation and extremism in the country.

Speaking as chief guest, State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel said, "As a result of the government's right decision at the right time, it has become possible to control extremism."

In her inaugural speech, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "Respecting others' opinions and tolerance could keep everybody away from extremism."

Urging youths from all religious identities to come forward, she said, "Not only donor organisations, but also the

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New nat'l plan needed to end child labour: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should formulate a new national plan of action (NPA) to eliminate child labour from the country by 2025, demanded rights activists at a discussion yesterday.

Blaming the government's failure in the NPA for 2012-2016, they stressed establishing an effective monitoring system to implement a fresh plan in this regard.

They were addressing a discussion on "Elimination of Hazardous Child Labour in Bangladesh: Issues and Opportunities" organised by Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), a network of 269 NGOs working for child rights, at the capital's Cirdap auditorium.

Mujibur Haque, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Labour and Employment, said the country has a policy on domestic workers' protection and welfare, but a law for such workers, particularly children, should be enacted for their proper protection.

"The ministry concerned should be more vocal in this regard," said the MP.

In his speech, Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary, a member of parliamentary caucus on child rights, said the government should prioritise elimination of child labour to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

BSAF Director Abdus Shaheed Mahmud said about 13 lakh children in the country are involved in hazardous labour. "A collaborative effort of the

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'Whatever she said was on her own responsibility'

Oikya Parishad denies links with Priya Saha's comments to Trump

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday said it has no links with the comments made by its suspended organising secretary Priya Saha while meeting US President Donald Trump.

"Although Priya Saha was one of the organising secretaries of the Parishad, she didn't meet the US president on behalf of the organisation," Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Oikya Parishad, said at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

"Whatever she told the president is solely her own

responsibility. There is no connection of the organisation to it," he said.

Rana Dasgupta said they have seen in a release of Freedom House of USA that Priya Saha had been mentioned as "general secretary" of the Parishad.

"Some US media mentioned Priya Saha as general secretary and me its president. Actually, I'm not president of Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad," he said.

Against the backdrop of confusion created due to bearing such organisational identity during her stay in USA, the standing committee of the Parishad

an emergency meeting. She had been relieved from all organisational activities, he said.

Rana Dasgupta said upon her return to Dhaka and hearing her statement, next course of action will be taken.

Pointing out Priya's allegation of disappearance of 3.7 crore Hindu, Buddhist and Christian people to Trump, the Parishad general secretary said, "Only she can explain what she had meant by disappear."

"If she meant minorities disappeared from independent Bangladesh, then it is untrue. We condemn and protest it," said Rana Dasgupta.

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Amid four lanes of parked vehicles and roadside shops, finding room for movement in the road has become nothing short of an obstacle course. The photo was taken in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ESSENTIALS AT LOW PRICE TCB sale to begin Sunday

STAR REPORT

Consumers will be able to buy edible oil, lentils and sugar by up to 23 percent lower than average market prices ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, through mobile retailing vans of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB).

The state agency said it would operate 187 mobile trucks through its dealers to sell edible oil, sugar and medium-sized lentils in city corporations and district towns. Sales will begin on Sunday and continue until further notice, said a press release.

It would sell bottled soybean oil at Tk 85 per litre.

TCB's lentil prices would be Tk 65 and sugar at Tk 50 per kg, according to TCB.

The corporation said it will sell commodities at 35 spots in Dhaka city, 10 in Chattogram and five each in other divisional cities. Two sales trucks will operate in other district towns, said the release.

Each buyer would be able to buy five litres of soybean and four kilogrammes of sugar and lentils each.

PRODUCT	AVERAGE PRICE IN DHAKA (TK)	TCB PRICE (TK)	DIFFERENCE
Soybean oil (litre/per bottle)	103	85	-17%
Lentil (kg)	65	50	-23%
Sugar (kg)	55	50	-9%

SOURCE: TRADING CORPORATION OF BANGLADESH