

Human rights violators must face trial

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said those who will violate the human rights in Bangladesh, must be brought to the book of law.

"People's access to justice is a part of their human rights. Considering it, the government has formulated the Usage of Information Technology by the Court Act, 2020 through passing a bill in the parliament in order to operate the judicial functions online within a short time after the Covid-19 pandemic started, so that people are not deprived of justice. As a result, all courts of the country could run judicial functions even amid the severe outbreak of coronavirus," he said.

He said this while speaking to a function virtually organised by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on

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A woman puts a plastic stool out in the sun so her pet can dry off as she is groomed with a fine-toothed comb. Cats hate getting wet, but it may be necessary, especially for the more boisterous and outdoorsy ones, to be given a shower once in a while. The photo was taken recently from the capital's Tajmahal Road area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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GOVT'S SOCIAL SAFETY NET

Monthly allotment nominal, should be increased: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday said the average monthly cash transfer to beneficiaries under the government's social safety net programmes should be increased to Tk 1,000.

"It's kind of my proposal," the minister said while addressing an online seminar.

He said the current amount between Tk 500 and Tk 700 a month provided to each beneficiary is nominal.

Development Journalist Forum of Bangladesh under the initiative of Action for Social Development and in association with Germany-based Bread for the World organised the online seminar on "Covid-19 Social Safety Net Programme and Health Rights".

Addressing the seminar, the planning minister said a directive has been given to the local administration to provide additional amount to those who will be qualified for the safety net programmes due to Covid-19 via local government authorities.

He also said the safety net programmes should be expanded further.

The minister said a large allocation has been proposed for the safety net programmes in the 8th Five-Year Plan, and he was trying to inject more money in the sector.

The government's social protection budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year is about Tk 95,574 crore, whereas the budget in 2019-20 fiscal was about Tk 81,865 crore, said Nazneen Ahmed, senior research fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

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List ready, but who will administer?

Training of health workers yet to start in Khulna

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

With only a week left before the countrywide Covid-19 vaccination campaign kicks off on February 7, training of field-level healthcare workers in Khulna division is yet to start.

"We are yet to provide any kind of training to those who will administer the vaccine," Khulna district civil surgeon Niaz Mohammad told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said experts from the capital will arrive soon to train the health workers. According to the civil surgeon's office, Covid-19 vaccination will be given at Khulna Sadar Hospital, Medical College Hospital, Specialized Hospital, Chest Disease Hospital, Police Hospital in the city corporation area and at the health complexes at upazila level.

In Khulna district, a total of 44 teams including 26 in Khulna City Corporation will work in this regard. Each team will consist two vaccinators and four volunteers.

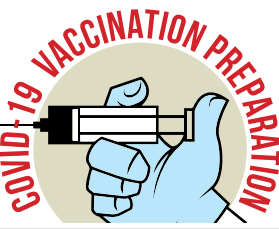
Dr Swapan Kumar Halder, health officer of KCC, said they need exclusive training on handling, preservation and distribution of the vaccine.

Aparna Biswas, health official at Batiaghata upazila, echoed him. She said they have just enrolled names of the personnel who will be vaccinated but did not get any directives from the authorities concerned as to what will be their next course of action.

"It's imperative that the field level health workers be provided with training on how to administer the vaccine and also about the side effects, if any," she said.

Asked, Khulna Divisional Health Director Dr Rashida Begum assured that health workers will be given special training in this regard. She, however, could not say when it will begin or how many staff members will be trained.

This correspondent spoke to many locals



who said they were not fully aware of the vaccination campaign. They urged the government to raise awareness among people to rule out misinformation and rumours and ensure clarity and accountability in the campaign.

Saddam Hossain (40), a resident of Bastuhara area in the city, said, "He is willing to take the vaccine but not sure when he will get it."

Meanwhile, health officials of the division said they are well equipped to store the vaccine.

In Khulna district, 33 ILRs (Ice-Lined refrigerators) have been prepared to store about 2.31 lakh coronavirus vaccines. Of these, 7,000 vaccines can be kept in each refrigerator. Of the 33 ILRs, 15 are in the city while two in each upazila.

"The initial preparations for the vaccination have been finalised with the health ministry. We have also formed a committee with the deputy commissioner as president and three member secretaries and members of parliament as advisers," the civil surgeon said.

He said they have also sent a letter to the ministry for 10 more ILRs.

"In the first phase, around 6,000 names have been listed in nine upazilas of Khulna for vaccination with health workers and other frontliners being given the top priority. We are preparing to vaccinate around 97,000 people in the first stage," he said.

As various vaccination activities are already underway at the upazila health complexes, arrangements have been made to preserve the Covid-19 vaccines there, he added.

According to the civil surgeon's office, 97,031 vaccines will arrive at Khulna, in the first phase, within a day or two.

Dr Rashida Begum said, "We have held

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Man held with 2,080 yaba pills in stomach

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 2,080 pieces of yaba stashed in his stomach, Golam Mostafa Mandal landed at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport from Cox's Bazar yesterday.

He attempted to sneak out through the VIP terminal around 1pm, but Armed Police Battalion (APBn) challenged him, suspecting his movement.

Mostafa initially denied having any contraband items with him but an X-ray confirmed the yaba in his stomach.

The officials later recovered the pills that he put in small packets and swallowed in a hotel in Cox's Bazar before boarding the flight, said Alamgir Hossain, additional superintendent (ops and media) of Airport APBn.

Apart from Mostafa, the APBn official arrested his accomplice Mohammad Ali, who arrived at the airport with an auto-rickshaw to receive him.

Alamgir said a drug dealer named Selim gave the pills to Mostafa, while another named Rahman was supposed to receive the drugs. He used to get Tk 5,000 for carrying of each consignment from Cox's Bazar to Dhaka.

The street value of the pills is Tk 10 lakh, APBn said.

Rohingya youth arrested over murder of JP leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

One month after he went missing, police recovered the decomposed body of a Jatiya Party leader from his farm house in Lohagara upazila of Chattogram early yesterday.

The deceased -- Anwar Hossain (42) -- was the JP vice president of Lohagara upazila unit, said police quoting family members.

Meanwhile, police arrested a Rohingya youth, Anwar (22), from Kutupalong camp of Cox's Bazar and based on his information, dug out Anwar's body from his farm house, said Additional Superintendent of Police (Satkania circle) Jakaria Rahman.

The police official said Anwar went missing one month back after he left home for his farm house. Failing to contact him, family members filed a missing diary with Lohagara Police Station.

"During investigation, police came to

know that two Rohingya youths had been working with Anwar at his cattle farm and they also went missing soon after Anwar disappeared," said the police official.

Police tracked Anwar and detained him from Cox's Bazar. He later told law enforcers where Anwar was buried after murder.

Based on his information, police searched the farm house in the upazila's Darbesh Hat and recovered the decomposed body, the additional SP said.

During primary interrogation, Anwar said he and another Rohingya youth named Mahmudul first hit Anwar on the head with a spade when he was resting in bed and after he succumbed to his injury, they buried him, the police official said.

Police suspect Anwar was murdered following dispute over salary and for money.



Gatherings at educational institutions have virtually gone extinct due to pandemic-induced restrictions. The age-old tradition of uniting at college premises after HSC results is also gone. Some students still tried to recapture the magic by getting together at Barishal's Amrita Lal Dey College yesterday following the publication of auto pass results online.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

IN REMEMBRANCE



We fondly remember **Late Aziz H. A. Sattar**, the founding Managing Director of GMG Group of Industries, on his 28th death anniversary. He was a pioneer and a role model of industrialization in this country. His unfathomable depth of knowledge, vision, uphill struggle and firm determination may inspire all of us. Today we solicit doa for his departed soul.

Family members, well wishers & employees
of
GMG Group

Promote traditional solutions to combat climate change: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the effects of climate change are gradually becoming a reality, it is important to come to an agreement about water sharing and realise the significance of traditional innovations and solutions, speakers said at the concluding session of the 6th International Water Conference held on Friday.

Water is a common good and key natural resource. It is an important component of bilateral relationship, said Nathalie Chuard, Ambassador, The Switzerland Embassy in Bangladesh. "We should learn to peacefully manage our common water," she said.

The conference, organised by ActionAid Bangladesh, was held virtually this year.

"By the year 2050, the demand of water will go up by 50 percent," said Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the standing committee of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

"The Barendra areas of Bangladesh are drought prone and people are dependent on ground water for their irrigation. However, ground water is getting depleted and during dry or winter season, water scarcity becomes a big problem," said Prof Saleemul Huq, Director of International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCAD).

Ken O'Flaherty, COP26 Regional Ambassador of Asia Pacific and South Asia, stated that the United Kingdom has pledged GBP 11.4 billion over the next five years to rein in the effects of climate change, half of which is to be spend on adaptation.

Earlier, during the first thematic session, titled "Water and Climate: Grassroot Innovations and Solutions", speakers emphasised on grassroots innovations and solutions over technological solutions.

Dr Dipak Gyawali, former Nepalese Minister of Water Resources, elaborated on how local communities have a different perspective on water resource management. Local solutions and innovations such as brushwood dam or rubber dams can be more useful to combat the effects of climate change in some regards, he mentioned.

Dr Liyan Zheng -- Professor and Director, Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Tianjin University of Finance and Economics -- argued that policy makers should carefully investigate and study existing grassroots innovations and solutions before developing any policy.

Farah Kabir, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, stated, "We should shift from land-centric to water centric approach".

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Pragati Life wins ICSB Gold Award



Mr. M. J. Azim, Managing Director & CEO of Pragati Life Insurance Limited receiving the Gold Award of 7th ICSB National Award for Corporate Governance Excellence 2019 from Mr. Tipu Munshi MP, Honorable Minister of Commerce.



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