

ENDING SEXUAL ABUSE AT WORKPLACE

# Separate law need of the hour: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday stressed the need for a comprehensive law to protect female workers from workplace harassment.

They said achievement in this area will help reduce gender-based violence as a whole.

Speakers urged the government to ratify the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention-190 recognising the "right to a workplace free from gender-based violence and harassment."

The roundtable, titled "Gender-based Harassment and Violence: Prevention Requires Coordinated Initiatives" was jointly organised by Gender Platform Bangladesh and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Addressing the roundtable, Nazrul Islam Khan, secretary-general of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), said a law preventing workplace violence and harassment against female workers is a necessity and should be formulated within a short time.

Mentioning that a draft has been submitted to the law ministry recently,

54 female workers faced workplace violence in 2021

5.6pc female UNOs faced workplace sexual harassment

48,233 women, children faced violence from Apr 2020 to Sept 2021

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Formulate separate law

Take stakeholders' opinions on draft act

Ratification of ILO Convention-190

Proper implementation of HC verdict

he stressed the need for generating stakeholders' opinions on the draft act.

"Without a humane society, it will be very tough for us to accomplish our goal in this regard," said Shirin Akhter, lawmaker and member of parliamentary committee on primary and mass education ministry, while chairing the roundtable.

During a presentation, BILS Director Nazma Yesmin referred to a Transparency International Bangladesh study and said 5.6 percent of female UNOs in the country have faced sexual harassment while on duty, while a Manusher Jonno Foundation study

found that from April 2020 to September 2021, 48,233 women and children faced various forms of violence in the country.

Moreover, a BILS study based on news reports found that from January to December 25 this year, 54 female workers faced workplace violence, she added.

Abdullah Hil Rakib, director of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said they have introduced need-based training at different

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Siam can usually be spotted collecting scraps all day at this dumping ground at Dakshin Surma upazila's Parirachak area. Whether it's summer or winter, he comes along with his mother at the break of dawn to make a living by selling the scraps. It's not just Siam, however. Several kids just like him, with plastic bags over their shoulders, rummage through the spot pretty much every day. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASTIR

## Polls-time govt, search committee led by Hasina

Urges Bangladesh Nationalist Front; Islami Oikya Jote calls for law to form independent, neutral EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Nationalist Front (BNF) yesterday placed a three-point proposal, including formation of the Election Commission (EC) through a search committee and an election-time government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

They placed the proposal while holding a dialogue with President Abdul Hamid over formation of the next EC.

Meanwhile, Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) while holding another dialogue with the president, placed a four-point



DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT

proposal, including enacting a law in line with the constitution on formation of an independent, neutral and acceptable EC.

Welcoming the delegation to Bangabhaban, the president said the opinions of political parties are crucial for formation of an acceptable EC, said a press release issued by Bangabhaban Press Wing. He said democracy should not be limited to only elections; it should also be spread through continuous practice.

"It's necessary to evaluate the sacrifices of leaders and workers, and principles and ideals of the

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## BNP not to join talks

Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

Describing the ongoing dialogue on the reconstitution of the Election Commission "pointless", BNP standing committee has decided not to take part in the talks with President Abdul Hamid.

A meeting of the party standing committee, the highest policymaking body, on Monday took the decision, said a press release signed by BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday. Amid the various speculations about BNP's participation in the talks, the party made its stance clear on it even before receiving the invitation from Bangabhaban for joining the dialogue.



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## It will go on whether anyone joins or not

Quader on EC formation process

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the process to form the Election Commission will continue whether anyone joins the dialogue or not.

The process which was followed earlier in reconstituting the EC is being followed now, Quader said, referring to BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's statement that the president's dialogue is meaningless and the crisis will not be resolved with it.



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## 'CORONA INSIGNIA' Police to get special recognition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In recognition of Bangladesh Police's role in tackling the pandemic, the government has approved a special logo, which will be put on a new "corona insignia" for officers to wear.

There are around 2.15 lakh members in the police force, and every member, including officers of Rapid Action Battalion, will be able to wear the insignia on their uniform.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan will inaugurate the logo today at a programme at Rajarbagh Police Auditorium, according to a statement of police headquarters (PHQ).

Kamruzzaman Rassel, assistant inspector general (media) of PHQ, told The Daily Star yesterday that the government has approved the logo to appreciate the front-liners. The home ministry gave the approval on October 31, after PHQ requested it. In a letter, PHQ said in 2020, when Covid-19 hit Bangladesh, and during the second wave this year, officers wholeheartedly tried to enforce directives like lockdown, general holiday, social distancing and distributing relief.

According to PHQ, the insignia will cost around Tk 150. The ministry gave the approval by issuing a gazette notification.

## 'Robust policy needed for healthy financial sector'

TIB calls for integrated strategy to prevent money laundering, ensure proper governance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday called for formulating an "integrated strategic policy", with participation of different stakeholders, and implementing it to prevent money laundering and ensure proper governance in the financial sector.

Such a policy can make it possible for the government to prevent sending money from Bangladesh through unauthorised channels and avert huge revenue loss, the graft watchdog said in a statement.

TIB welcomed Bangladesh Bank's recent initiative of relaxing rules for foreign nationals residing in Bangladesh

*The central bank's latest decision can bear fruit if, after combined efforts of relevant authorities, foreign nationals take this opportunity and send their incomes through legal channels*

to send remittance to their countries.

The central bank on Monday issued a notice, stating that foreigners who are working in the country can now send up to 80 percent of their monthly earnings. Earlier, they were allowed to remit 75 percent.

In the statement, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman referred to a TIB study published in February 5 last year and said a large number of foreign nationals work illegally in Bangladesh and send remittance to their home countries through hundi.

The total amount could be at least Tk 26,000 crore per annum, he said. "As a result, the government's annual revenue loss could be about Tk 12,000 crore," he added.

However, the central bank's latest decision can bear fruit if, after combined efforts of relevant authorities, foreign nationals take this opportunity and send their incomes through legal channels, the TIB executive director further said.

## Teacher held over sexual harassment of student

Holy Family Medical College suspends him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College's Assistant Professor, Dr Salauddin Chowdhury, on charge of sexually harassing a student.

ANM Imran Khan, assistant director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

Rapid Action Battalion held a press briefing yesterday evening regarding the incident.

Ramna Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge, Monirul Islam, said the student filed a case against the teacher under the Women and Child Repression Prevention Act yesterday.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said that Salauddin had made several inappropriate propositions to the student via Facebook messenger -- starting on September 9, 2020. When she refused his advances, the teacher threatened to fail her in exams.

When he met her on campus, he asked her to delete the messages and to meet him alone on several occasions. The teacher, according to the student,

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## 1 held with 44 gold bars at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials detained a man and seized 44 gold bars from inside two hammers at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on Tuesday night.

Detainee Ataor Rahman landed at the airport from Sharjah, United Arab Emirates on a flight around 9:15pm, according to a press release.

The officials stopped him when he was crossing the airport's green channel. He initially denied having any taxable items in his luggage, an official of customs told The Daily Star.

"After scanning, we found two hammers in his baggage. We then cut the hammers with bar cutter and found 44 gold bars inside," he said adding that they also found five pieces of gold bangles from his pocket.

The estimated value of the recovered gold is around Tk 3 crore.

Two cases were filed against him in this connection.



An art contest was held at Mymensingh city's Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin art gallery yesterday, marking the 107th birth anniversary of the maestro. Many children participated in the competition, spending their morning drawing and colouring images of the distinguished artist.

PHOTO: STAR

## SOUTH ASIAN DIGITAL MEDIA AWARDS Star wins for 5th consecutive time



CITY DESK

For the fifth consecutive time, The Daily Star has been announced as one of the winners of the South Asian Digital Media Awards 2021, organised by World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), in the "Best Branded Content Campaign" category.

It received the silver award along with Hindustan Times. The Hindu received the gold award, said a press release.

The awards are given by WAN-IFRA every year to recognise South Asian publishers who have delivered unique and original digital media.

From new approaches to digital subscriptions to impactful native advertising campaigns, these are projects designed to inspire everyone. The 2021 awards received more than 140 entries, a record jump of close to double the number of entries than the previous year, which were evaluated by a prestigious international panel of jury consisting of multi-award-winning individuals and journalists.

This year, The Daily Star received the award for the marketing campaign "Break the Taboo", an initiative with

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