

‘Form cell to keep soybean oil price under control’  
Petition seeks HC directive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition was filed with the High Court yesterday, seeking its directive on the government to set up a monitoring cell and control the price of soybean oil in the market.

Supreme Court lawyers Monir Hossain, Syed Mohidul Kabir and Mohammad Ullah submitted the petition as a public interest litigation based on a report published in The Daily Star on March 3 on soybean oil price hike.

In the petition, they prayed to the HC to order the government to take action through mobile court against those who are responsible for unusual price hike of the oil.

The HC may hold hearing on the petition today, petitioner Syed Mohidul Kabir told The Daily Star.

According to The Daily Star report, traders in their bid to make a quick buck are siphoning out soybean oil from sealed 5-litre containers and selling the cooking oil in loose form while others are hoarding the oil – driving the prices up in retail.

As edible oil has become expensive in the international market in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, dishonest traders have started creating an artificial crisis here.

Prices of edible oil have shot up and gone beyond the government’s fixed rates at retail, and the consumers as always are paying the price.



This year’s “Nirbhaya” Shahinur Akhter, Kohinoor Akter, Shantona Khisa, Shakila Islam and Hashi Begum pose with UNDP resident representative Sudipto Mukerjee after the award ceremony at the capital’s The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

# Brave, resilient, ‘Nirbhaya’

Star, UNDP recognise five women for climate action leadership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When Shakila Islam was only 12 years old, her family was hit by the super cyclone Sidr in Barishal.

Since then, she has been passionate about tackling climate crisis and its multisectoral impacts. As a youth, Shakila co-founded YouthNet for Climate Justice.

Now, the platform is a large coastal-based youth movement for climate advocacy.

On the occasion of International Women’s Day 2022, five women including Shakila were awarded as “Nirbhaya” (fearless) by The Daily Star and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh yesterday.

The others are Kohinoor Akter of

Chattogram, Hashi Begum of Barguna, Shahinur Akhter of Chandpur, and Shantona Khisa of Rangamati.

They were recognised for their “Leadership in Climate Action for Sustainable Future”. They received crests and certificates during a ceremony at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

“Women, children and elderly people are the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of global climate change. We are advocating so that women and other vulnerable groups of people can be protected from the adversity,” Shakila said.

This was the second edition of the “Nirbhaya” initiative. Last year, five women received similar recognition for their selfless initiatives amid the pandemic.

Shahinur Akhter (32) was raised by a

gypsy family in Chandpur after she was abandoned by her own family at the age of six.

Only being able to study up to fifth grade due to poverty, Shahinur now spends most of her monthly earning of Tk 5,000 from a sewing business on her two children’s education.

She is also a community leader in Chandpur municipality under UNDP initiative, and received her award for her contribution.

Like her, Kohinoor Akter (42) a mother of two, is an inspiration for thousands of women in Chattogram.

During the pandemic, Kohinoor established 374 hand-washing stations and distributed over 66,000 bars of

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Govt plans to improve life of stranded Biharis  
Says PM

“We want to see a human being as a human being. May be they didn’t want to live here then, but where will they go now? Their next generations were born in this country. We have to do something for them.”



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government plans to provide a better life for stranded Biharis in the country on humanitarian grounds, although the previous generation had opted for Pakistani citizenship after Bangladesh’s independence.

“We want to see a human being as a human being. May be they didn’t want to live here then, but where will they go now? Their next generations were born in this country. We have to do something for them,” she said.

Hasina said this while addressing an inaugural programme of road infrastructure and drainage system construction and development (phase-1) of the newly created 18 wards of Dhaka North City Corporation.

The programme was held at Kanchkura High School field of ward 44 under DNCC while the PM joined it from Gono Bhaban.

Talking about stranded Biharis, Hasina said not only in Dhaka, Biharis are living in various areas of the country.

“They wanted to go to Pakistan and have Pakistani citizenship after Bangladesh’s independence. But Pakistan never accepted them,” she recalled.

“They are now living in Bangladesh with their children and grandchildren. The living conditions are inhumane -- in congested spaces at Geneva Camps,” she said.

“I want to arrange good accommodation for them and engage them in jobs that utilise their skills,” she said. She said this cannot be done in Dhaka, and a convenient place is needed where

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# Coastal women bearing the brunt

Speakers tell webinar on climate change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Climate change is making it increasingly harder for coastal women to ensure reproductive health and tackle early marriages and domestic violence.

The woes of coastal women were revealed in a webinar titled “Women Breaking the Bias for Climate Justice”, organised by ActionAid Bangladesh yesterday, ahead of International Women’s Day.

Taking part in the webinar, Josna Rani Mondol, a coastal woman from Satkhira’s Shyamnagar upazila, said even though the place of her people was surrounded by water, not a single drop was drinkable.

She said salinity has engulfed everything, from drinking water to crop production, disrupting their daily life. The crisis drives males of the families to go elsewhere in search of work, which makes girls more vulnerable to several issues.

“Salinity invades local ponds during storm surges. We are forced to use saline water for daily chores, which exposes us to many diseases. The treatment cost has also burdened our lives,” she explained.

Josna said they travel two to three miles to fetch drinking water, which hinders them from doing household chores like cooking and cleaning. This predicament also leads to domestic violence, as males quite often beat their wives for not cooking on time.

Eminent climate-change expert Prof Saleemul Huq said the impact of climate change on women and children is enormous. “I will

reveal the story of our women’s struggle in the next COP. No matter which country or city we live in, we all must take equal responsibility to fight climate change.”

From her experience, ActionAid Project Manager Taslima Akhter said after losing their homes to cyclones, many families desperately try to marry off their girls, due to security concerns.

Mahbuba Nasreen, pro vice-chancellor of Bangladesh Open University, said, “To fight the

- Salinity invading water bodies, exposing women to diseases
- After losing homes to cyclones, families try to marry off girls
- Many forced to live dangerously on embankments
- Women having to walk miles to get drinking water

impacts of climate change, we have to show examples of women’s resilience, which will enable us to adapt further.”

Eminent architect Marina Tabassum said, “We have to adopt a sustainable water-management policy, through which we will be able to hold water in many ways.”

Runa Khan, founder and executive director of Friendship, Nujulee Begum, protection lead at ActionAid, and Syeda Jafari Husain, consultant at World Bank Group, also spoke in the webinar, moderated by Farah Kabir, country director of ActionAid Bangladesh.

Later, four women were awarded “Nasreen Smriti Padak” for contributions in their respective fields.



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