

‘Unconstitutional, demeaning’

Say noted citizens on info ministry’s circular on not to use the word ‘indigenous’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens yesterday demanded that a circular of the information ministry asking the media personnel not to use the word “Indigenous” be revoked immediately as it is “unconstitutional and demeaning”.

They issued a joint statement in this regard.

The noted citizens said they came to know that the circular was issued on July 19. It asked the media not to use the word “indigenous” in talk shows ahead of World Indigenous Day on August 9, citing constitutional obligation.

“The circular came to action being provoked by a government agency, which does not have the jurisdiction to decide which words align with constitution and which does not. The government itself used the word ‘Indigenous’ more than once in its manifesto during the 2008 election,” the statement said.

Expressing concern, they said such practice goes beyond their jurisdiction and such move is not expected at all.

“Our constitution articulated that if any section of the constitution leads to any debate, then the country’s Supreme Court will make a decision to clarify the issue,” they said.

They urged the government to revoke the circular, issued to demean the marginalised community including the indigenous people.

The signatories include Sultana Kamal, Khushi Kabir, Dr

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With one foot above the pedal and three passengers on the back, a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver runs at high speed on Madartek road in the capital's Bosila area. Even though plying of these vehicles remains illegal, they can still be seen on the streets, posing a threat to the rider and passengers. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

EC dialogue with AL, JP today

STAR REPORT

The Election Commission is all set to hold a dialogue with the ruling Awami League and main opposition in the parliament Jatiya Party today.

The EC is holding the dialogue from July 17, seeking political parties' recommendations on how to hold the next general polls in a free and fair manner.



The AL delegation will participate in the dialogue at the EC office under the leadership of party's General Secretary Obaidul Quader at 3:00pm.

The same day, JP led by its Chairman GM Quader will also hold a dialogue with the EC from 11:00am.

Until Thursday, 26 political parties attended the EC dialogue while nine others, including BNP, have skipped it.

Traffickers on the prowl online

Say speakers, call for proper coordination to combat menace

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Efforts to combat human trafficking need to be coordinated both in cyberspace and the real world, since the menace has latched on to the internet and gotten worse amid the pandemic, said speakers yesterday.

They called upon stakeholders, including the government and international partners, to focus on a rights-based approach to prevent exploitation of victims and shrink the space for traffickers to prowl.

Marking World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, the home ministry and Counter Trafficking in Persons Technical Working Group of Bangladesh UN Network on Migration organised the national consultation on “Combating Human Trafficking in the Context of Use of Technology and its Abuse” at a city hotel.

Addressing the event, Tariqul Islam, country director of Justice and Care Bangladesh, said technology is enabling traffickers to reach vulnerable groups to deceive and exploit.

Besides, it facilitates communication and coordination between trafficking networks, from transport of victims to transfer of profits, said Tariqul, who has recently been recognised by the US state department as an “advocate” for victims of trafficking.

However, technology is also being harnessed to fight this crime, he further said.

Abdusattor Esoev, International Organization for

WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

TRAFFICKERS AND TECH
It enables them to reach vulnerable groups
Facilitates their communication, coordination
Used for recruiting, controlling, exploiting victims

RECOMMENDATIONS
Proper coordination among all stakeholders
Rights-based approach, raising cyber awareness
Using tech to rescue victims

Migration chief of mission in Bangladesh, said traffickers are increasingly abusing technology to recruit, control and exploit victims, and their methods evolve on a daily basis.

Covid-19 has allowed traffickers to shift their focus to the internet even further, he said, adding that technology also offers significant opportunities to eradicate trafficking. Technology can help detect trafficking trends, rescue victims, and disrupt organised cross-border trafficking networks, he said.

In her speech, UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis said the pandemic has forced many migrants to rely on online resources including social media to organise their journey.

This has led to trafficking spreading to cyberspace, she said, adding that this year's theme “use and abuse of technology” is therefore extremely relevant.

Prevention and raising awareness are critical to ensure that what is illegal and prosecuted offline is also illegal and prosecuted online, she further said.

Addressing the event as special

guest, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the government will continue its relentless efforts to curb the crime as per international commitments and national policies.

“[Bangladesh] is making every effort to make the best use of technology in this endeavour. But we also need our partners to be more humane in dealing with the victims,” he added.

He added that authorities are using information and communication technology to effectively combat the crime through four domains: awareness building, reporting, rescue, and prosecution of traffickers.

Addressing the event as chief guest, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the government has “zero tolerance” for human trafficking.

Bangladesh retaining “Tier 2” position in the US Trafficking in Persons Report-2022 reflects the government's continuous efforts to combat the menace, he said.

However, cumulative efforts from all sectors are required to address challenges of trafficking and illegal migration, he added.

Problems of human trafficking

affect almost every country -- whether it is a country of origin, transit or destination -- said British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson.

Abuse of social media by traffickers is not only a problem of Bangladesh but one present across the globe, he said, adding that preventing forced labour by promoting safe migration is a

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AK ABDUL MOMEN
Foreign Minister

“Cumulative efforts from all sectors are required to address challenges of trafficking and illegal migration.”

ASADUZZAMAN KHAN
Home Minister

major goal of the UK government's work in Bangladesh.

Scott Brandon, acting deputy chief of mission of the US Embassy in Bangladesh, said working to fight human trafficking remains one of his country's top priorities around the world, including Bangladesh.

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‘No cars on roads one day a week’

Demand green activists

DU CORRESPONDENT

Environmental organisations and schools yesterday demanded private cars stop plying the roads one day a week to save fuel amid the ongoing energy crisis.

They made the demand at a programme held in front of the National Museum in the capital's Shahbagh.

Speakers at the event recommended increasing tax on import of private cars, refraining from building car-friendly infrastructure (elevated

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Creating rumours now main task of BNP leaders: AL

AGENCIES

Creating rumors has become the main task of BNP leaders, said Awami League in a post on its verified Facebook page.

The comment was posted in response to BNP's recent remarks over the state of country's forex reserve amid the ongoing austerity measures to deal with global headwinds, reports UNB.

“The party is living on the oxygen of rumours,” the Facebook post reads.

The reserve of Bangladesh is now stable at \$40 billion while BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the reserve is not more than \$16 billion, AL said.

“He (Fakhrul) may have said this to reduce the gap of \$40 billion with \$2 billion during the BNP era. Mirza Fakhrul does politics based on rumors and lies,” reads the post.

Meanwhile, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP's call for movement to oust the government is nothing but delirious ramblings, reports BSS.

Quader said BNP's own leaders and activists have become frustrated over the party's call for movement.

“BNP could not even wage any movement to free their party chairperson,” he said while briefing reporters at his official residence.

Auto-rickshaw driver killed in road accident

UNB, Dhaka

A battery-run auto-rickshaw driver was killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle near Asad Gate in the capital yesterday.

The deceased -- Monir Sheikh (40) -- was from Gopalganj, said Abdur Rashid, sub-inspector of Mohammadpur Police Station.

The accident occurred early in the morning and his body was found lying in front of Nabil Paribahan bus counter on Mirpur Road, he said.

“Efforts are on to identify the vehicle and the driver that is responsible for the accident. The body has been sent for autopsy,” said the SI.



The government has pushed the entire road management system towards anarchy. Hundreds of people are losing their lives in accidents due to chaos on the roads.

MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR
BNP Secretary General



The country's railway crossings have become a death trap. It has been 50 years but rail travel is still not safe yet.

GM QUADER
Jatiya Party Chairman



Death toll 9

Total number of patients 2,580

332 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients 2,239

85 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 31

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:20 12:45 5:00 6:50 8:15

JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:15 6:55 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A vendor swats off flies from a pile of sweet, yellow jewels, or more precisely -- jackfruit pods -- kept ready for customers to purchase on the go. These vendors purchase whole jackfruits from Karwan Bazar and sell the pods for Tk 50 per kilo. This photo was taken in Lalbagh area recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Dhaka air ‘moderate’ for monsoon showers

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka's air quality continues to be in the “moderate” zone, all thanks to intermittent monsoon showers.

With an air quality index (AQI) score of 65 at 8:42am yesterday, the metropolis ranked 26th in the list of cities with the worst air quality.

Iran's Tehran, China's Beijing and Pakistan's Lahore occupied the first three spots in the list, with AQI scores of 145, 134 and 133, respectively.

An AQI between 50 and 100 is considered “moderate” with an acceptable air quality. An AQI between 101 and 200 is considered “unhealthy”.