

Special law to protect journalists

Demands TIB

UNB, Dhaka

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday demanded a special law to protect journalists because they come under attacks while gleaning irregularities and corruption news, as part of attempts to gag the voice of the media.

TIB expressed deep concern over the recent attacks and demanded immediate, fair investigation and prosecution of all the attacks, said a release.

The recent spate of attacks on journalists while collecting news of irregularities and corruption is not an isolated incident, but rather a continuing trend and ill-attempt of gagging the voice of media through abuse of power, attacks, cases and impunity, said TIB.

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ATTACK ON JOURNOS

Medical centre owner, three others remanded

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed four people, including the owner of a medical centre, on three-day remand each in a case filed over attempting to kill a senior reporter and cameraperson of Independent Television in Kamrangirchar.

The accused are Dr MH Osmani (55), owner of SPA River Side Medical Centre; Dr DMA Abu Zahid (55), a physician of the centre; Abul Hasanat Sumon, director (admin and finance); and Rassel Howlader (38), accounts manager of Life and Care Hospital. Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Farha Diba Chhanda passed the order after IO Mohammad Mostafa Anwar, an inspector of

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4 arrested for trafficking 2 sisters to India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) claimed to have arrested four members of a human trafficking gang on charge of trafficking two sisters to India. They are: Rana Ahmed, Sujon Mia, Sahabuddin and Naimur Rahman Shamim.

They were arrested from Jhenidah and Chuadanga, said Nazrul Islam, special superintendent (Serious Crime Division) of CID.

The arrestees along with some others trafficked them to India in May last year where they were forced into prostitution, he said.

The sisters fled from the brothel in India and with the help of local police, returned to Bangladesh in March, he said.



Dengue death toll **15**

Total number of patients **3,408**

369 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **3,024**

92 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

The pristine view of a boatman paddling in a waterbody surrounded by greenery would make anyone feel one with nature -- that is if the background wasn't present. Behind this view is Aminbazar landfill, where piles of garbage are dumped daily. Now, a mountain of waste can be seen from the distance, with smoke, a product of the burning trash, billowing from below. This photo was taken recently.

They've every right to be identified as 'indigenous'

Say speakers at events marking International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parbatya Chattogram Jana Samhati Samiti President Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, known as Santu Larma, yesterday slammed the government for its directive discouraging the use of the word "indigenous".

Addressing an event in the capital yesterday, Larma said the indigenous people have every right to identify themselves as "indigenous".

"How would it feel if the Bangalees are termed the 'majority community' instead of Bangalees?" he said.

Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network, with support from Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), organised the event at The Daily Star Centre, marking the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples observed globally on Tuesday.

In a directive on July 19, the information ministry made a "request by order" to participants of talk shows, university teachers, experts, newspaper editors and civil society members not to use the word "indigenous" as part of their "constitutional obligation".

In his speech, Larma said the directive has been issued prohibiting the word's use in mass media, talk shows and administrative activities mentioning it as "unconstitutional".



Speakers at the discussion yesterday. Bangladesh Indigenous Women's Network, with support from Manusher Jonno Foundation, organised the event at The Daily Star Centre in the capital. PHOTO: STAR

Larma also said the government has been using its state machinery in different ways to establish one word, creating an existential and identity crisis for the indigenous peoples.

"In what way I will identify myself is my decision. It is my fundamental right. But the government refuses to recognise it," he added.

Addressing the event, Abu Sayeed Khan, advisory editor of Samakal, said it is the state's responsibility to ensure the security of the country's indigenous peoples.

"However, that was far from happening. The reason behind the issuing of this directive to abandon the word 'indigenous' is

unclear," he said.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad general secretary Maleka Banu said the state has overlooked the due recognition of the indigenous people of the country.

"The indigenous people of the country have been pushed towards marginalisation in the name of tourism and peace," she said.

Meanwhile, addressing a rally in the capital's Central Shaheed Minar on Tuesday -- organised by Bangladesh Adivasi Forum and supported by MJF -- Larma urged the young indigenous people to unite and carry on the legacy of the struggle for equality initiated by their ancestors.

He also lambasted the ruling

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Covid jabs for kids to start today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) will launch the Covid-19 inoculation campaign for children, aged 5-11 years, today.

"The main campaign will start from the 25th of this month in only the city corporation areas and then it will be implemented countrywide," Dr Shamsul Haque, member secretary of the Covid-19 Vaccine Management Taskforce Committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque will inaugurate today's event at Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka around noon, said a press release from the ministry.

At the event, the directorate of primary education will vaccinate 15 children, Shamsul Haque said without elaborating further. About the total number of children eligible for this campaign, he said, "We have to cover every [primary] school and the the directorate of primary education has been working on it."

There are a total of 2,19,32,638 primary schoolchildren, according to the directorate of primary education website data. Besides, there are many children of this age

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Don't panic, we're not in a bad shape

LGRD minister tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no person in villages without food; every one has clothes, and Bangladesh is not in a bad situation, said Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday.

"There is a deficit in the current account [at present] due to container congestion. But the country has reserves. This [deficit] can be covered by reserves," said the minister at a city dialogue held at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

"Panic is being created, but I don't think we are in bad shape. We must come out of this misconception," he added.

The minister also said almost all roads in villages are paved. Primary schools have been established in every village, and houses are being built there.

Urban Development Journalists Forum, Bangladesh (UDJFB) organised the discussion on "Price increase of daily commodities and fuel: a challenge to public life."

The minister said, "We are importing more. Bangladesh imports the equivalent of \$8 billion every month. This is putting pressure on us. On the other hand, we are happy to see Bangladesh importing that much a month... We can handle it now."

"Subsidy cannot be given in all cases. Subsidy cannot solve the problem... If subsidies are given, sectors will lose discipline. The government analyses where subsidies should be given and follows through," he said.

"In the last eight years, BPC made profits worth Tk 50,000 crore and have faced Tk 8,000 crore loss since February. People of Bangladesh were forced to purchase fuel at a high price when fuel costs came down to the

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Parties working together a hallmark of democracy

Says US envoy Peter Haas

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Political parties working together to establish peoples' rights despite ideological differences is the hallmark of democracy, said US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas yesterday.

"Just to be clear. The US does not favour any political party over another," he said. He was happy to see leaders of three major political parties -- Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party -- sitting at a table together for healthy discussions in an event at a city hotel on the day.

At the event, he was addressing the launching of the e-learning platform "Politics Matters" (politicismatters.com.bd).



PHOTO: COLLECTED

USAID's "Strengthening Political Landscape" project, implemented by Democracy International, launched the platform to bring political knowledge and skills to the fingerprints of Bangladeshi political leaders and enthusiasts across the country.

Information Minister and Awami League Central Joint Secretary Hasan Mahmud, BNP Standing Committee Member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Jatiya Party Presidium Member Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary were present at the programme.

Haas said since his arrival in Bangladesh, he has met many political leaders and parties, and he will continue to meet more of them as he wants to learn more about Bangladesh.

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Form committee to find out causes, people responsible

Says HC on fire at BM Container Depot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to immediately form an expert committee to find out the causes and people responsible for the devastating fire at BM Container Depot in Chattogram's Sitakunda in which 52 people were killed and more than 200 were injured in last June.

The secretary at the ministry of energy and mineral resources has been ordered to constitute the committee led by a professor from Chemical Engineering Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) for this purpose.

In response to a petition, the HC also asked the expert committee to submit its report before this court in three months after receiving the order, Deputy Attorney General Arobinda Kumar Roy told The Daily Star.

At the same time, the HC also issued a rule asking the government and container depot to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to give adequate compensation to the families of the victims who were killed and injured in the fire at BM Depot. The HC also asked why negligence and failure in preventing the incident and to bring the fire under control immediately should not be declared illegal and why legal action should not be taken against them.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Under these large umbrellas are a boatload of hawkers, which have taken over almost half of this road, along with the footpath, at Jurain. After every eviction drive, these stalls make a routing return to the very same place, choking the road once again. This photo was taken yesterday.