

Launch judicial enquiry at once

21 women rights activists on allegations against BCL leaders of Eden College

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-one women rights activists demanded a judicial inquiry into the recent allegations of sexual exploitation – made against the ruling Awami League's student wing Bangladesh Chhatra League Eden Mohila College unit leaders – in a statement yesterday.

They also sought exemplary punishment for those involved in forcing students into sexual relationships, under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012.

Activists in the statement mentioned that it is an irony of history that leaders of BCL are allegedly torturing their juniors and classmates physically and mentally and forcing them to have sexual relationships with party leaders or businessmen, just like the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators did during the Liberation War.

The activists also expressed grave concerns over the silence of the government and the education minister in this regard and demanded the formation of a judicial committee to enquire into these allegations.

It also demanded exemplary punishment for the responsible leaders under section 11 of the Human Trafficking Act.

The Act mentions that if any person brings any person to Bangladesh or transfers the persons inside the territory of the country to engage them in prostitution or any other form of sexual exploitation, they will be punished

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People from all walks of life thronged Central Shaheed Minar yesterday noon to pay their respects to veteran journalist Toab Khan. Many placed floral wreaths by his coffin and recalled his immense contributions to the country's media industry.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'Media lost its guardian angel'

Toab Khan laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The media industry has lost its guardian angel, the pioneer of modern journalism in Bangladesh – Toab Khan.

Civil-society members said this yesterday at Central Shaheed Minar, while bidding farewell to the Ekushey Padak-winning journalist.

"Now, it is rare to find a person like him, who boldly stood beside pro-liberation forces. I don't know how this loss will be recouped," said Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee President Shahriar Kabir.

Amid much love and grief, politicians, colleagues, relatives and eminent citizens paid tribute to Toab Khan, editor of Dainik Bangla. He was laid to rest at Banani graveyard yesterday afternoon, after his third namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Central Mosque.

Before his burial,

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3 dead, 525 hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three more dengue patients died while 525 were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday.

The total number of dengue deaths rose to 61, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Among the death cases, 29 are in Dhaka, 20 in Cox's Bazar, six in Chattogram and five in Barishal.

The total number of dengue cases rose to 17,820. A total of 2,144 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while 15,615 have been released from hospitals.

A monsoon survey of the DGHS, which was conducted between August 11 and 23, found the presence of Aedes mosquitoes in 13.4 percent of houses under DNCC and 11.75 percent of homes under DSCC.

The survey also found 13 wards under DNCC and 14 in DSCC as highly risky areas. Experts also urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to control Aedes mosquitoes, carriers of dengue virus.

Woman crushed to death between two buses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was crushed to death between two buses in Dhaka's Gulistan area yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Halima Begum, (50) a diabetic patient heading towards Birdem General Hospital from Keraniganj, family members said.

She sustained critical injuries after being trapped between the buses of Ananda and Meghalaya Paribahan near the underground market in Gulistan around 9:00am, police said.

She was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where she passed away around 1:30pm, said Atikur Rahman, son-in-law of the deceased.

Inspector Bachchu Mia, in charge of DMCH Police outpost, said the body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy.

SHAKHARI BAZAR

Where tradition meets craftsmanship

NAZIFA RAIDAH

It is very easy for one to get woefully lost in the crevices and back alleys of Old Dhaka even with a guidebook. When one thinks of visiting Old Dhaka, Shakhari Bazar is a place that gets mentioned by almost all who either have lived or visited the area, thanks to its history associated with craftsman.

With the advent of Puja, Shakhari Bazar livens up with festivity and sales.

Located near the intersection of Islampur Road and Nawabpur Road – the two main arteries of the old city and only a block away from the Buriganga, Shakhari Bazar stretches along a narrow lane, lined with thin slices of richly decorated brick buildings built during the late Mughal or colonial period.

The name of the area is credited to the Shakhari community, who have kept the craft of making and selling "Shakha" (a white bangle made out of conch shells) – traditionally worn by married Hindu women – alive for ages.

The history of Shakhari Bazar dates back to the pre-Mughal days, if not earlier. The first mention of Puran Dhaka can be found in the writings of Mirza Nathan, the general turned historian, who travelled with Subahdar Islam Khan.

He mentioned Puran Dhaka as the area between Dholai Khal and Buriganga river – covering Shakhari Bazar, Tanti Bazar, Bangla Bazaar, Lakshmi Bazaar, Bangla Bazaar, Kamar Nagar, Sutar Nagar, Goala Nagar, and many more. Each "mohalla" or area used to belong to separate communities, depending on their craft and trade.

However, the Liberation War changed this demography as many Hindu craftsmen had to leave everything behind to save their lives.



PHOTO: ANIKA ANJUM

The ones who survived are the ones who have continued the lineage of their ancestral profession to the modern day, despite various difficulties. These craftspeople care deeply about their craft, so much so that many have said that their business and their very existence are intertwined.

And when one sees any of these "Shakha" or "Pola", that dedication surely reflects.

This correspondent spoke to many who are involved in this traditional craft at Shakhari Bazar, to understand the state of their affairs ahead of puja.

Shourav Chandra Shur (29), a Shakha and Puja appliance salesman at "Sreeguru Bhandar", said, "I'm the third generation in this business. My father and grandfather still take charge of a few of the shifts."

"We are seeing better sales now, owing to the puja season. Orders for this season were already sent out two months ahead. Our regulars are already picking up their orders," he added.

Walking down the winding Shakhari Bazar road, this correspondent saw crowds

gathering in almost every store. Some were visiting with their mothers, in-laws and daughters to buy Shakha and Pola.

Nandita Deb, a local who was seen at "Shur Brothers", said, "I live in Road-52 in this area. I visit this store every year because they sell the best Shakha. The price this time has not increased drastically as well."

Johnny Shukh (35), a salesman at "Nag Vander" has been working there for almost 14 years now. He highlighted that while there used to be many artisans available, their numbers have reduced over time.

"There was once a time we could do everything – from making the initial structure, down to the final polish. Now we just sell ready-made products. Many of these products come from India."

"A single shakha has to go through nine artisans to procure the final product. Hence, we don't bring in the raw, plain ones anymore as we only have a few artisans who can engrave designs on the shakhas," added Johnny.

Speaking on the current puja sales and stock, he said, "We usually bring around 2,000 to 4,000 shakhas in a single lot.

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Prof Yunus awarded Karl Kübel Prize

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Karl Kübel Foundation for Child and Family has awarded Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus with the Karl Kübel Prize on September 30.

The foundation honoured Prof Yunus' extraordinary and multifaceted commitment to families all over the world, Yunus Centre said in a press release recently.

With the motto "family counts", Karl Kübel Foundation celebrated its 50th anniversary this year in Bensheim, Germany.

The foundation, founded in 1972 by entrepreneur Karl Kübel, supports disadvantaged people in Germany and other parts of the world.

Headquartered in Bensheim in southern Hessen, the foundation has been supporting children and their parents worldwide for 50 years.

Dr Kerstin Humberg, deputy chairwoman of the foundation board, said Prof Yunus has made it possible for the children and families of his female customers to lead a better life.

The foundation praised the economist from Bangladesh, saying that he is a great source of hope in times of global crises, like the Covid-19 pandemic and global warming.

"Each of us can positively influence the lives of others around us. Now and in the future, we are all settlers of the course," said Humberg, who also pointed out parallels between philanthropist Karl Kübel and Prof Yunus.

"Both pursued social goals through entrepreneurial means [from] as early as the 1980s, deliberately focusing on helping people to help themselves. Yunus and Kübel were pioneers in entrepreneurial development cooperation," she said.



COVID VACCINATION

Deadline for first jab extended till September 8

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deadline for the campaign to administer the first dose of Covid-19 vaccines has been extended till September 8, said health officials yesterday.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) earlier announced concluding the special inoculation campaign yesterday, as the target was achieved. The campaign started on September 28.

"Due to the enthusiasm among people and considering the overall [Covid-19] situation, we have extended the deadline. No first dose will be available after the period," said Dr Shamsul Haque, member secretary of the National Covid-19 Vaccine Deployment Taskforce at the DGHS.

In the past three days, around 81 lakh people have received their first, second and booster doses. Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director

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