

Impunity creating insecurity: speakers

3pc of rape, sexual violence accused get punished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only three percent of the accused in cases of rape, gang-rape and sexual violence are punished, while the rest get away through the loopholes of the law or with the intervention of influential people, said speakers at an event yesterday.

They also said the culture of impunity in such incidents that take place in public spaces and transports has created an even more insecure situation for women and girls in the country.

They made the remarks at a views-exchange meeting, titled "Demanding a violence-free environment for women and girls in public spaces and public transport", organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at its Begum Munira Khan Auditorium in the capital's Segunbagicha.

Mentioning the data of a survey conducted jointly by UNDP, National Human Rights Commission and the Centre for information, Jewella Jebunnessa Khan, BMP movement secretary, said 36 percent of women regularly experience sexual harassment in public transports, including buses, trains, launches and other vehicles.

"Around 87 percent of women have experienced sexual violence at least once

in their lifetime in public spaces, while 66 percent experienced some forms of violence on multiple occasions. However, only 36 percent of them protested against the violence and harassment, found the online survey," she said.

BMP President Fauzia Moslem said it is crucial to exchange views with planners and policymakers regarding the issues women face in public spaces and transport.

She called for training for the administration, law enforcers, and public transport owners to sensitise them on such issues.

Ekattor TV journalist Nadia Sharmin said almost 99 percent of women face sexual harassment in public spaces and transport.

"It is a terrible experience for all women. To improve the situation, law enforcement agencies must play a proactive role in identifying the problems and taking initiatives to solve them," she said.

"The process of bus management also needs to be streamlined," added Nadia.

Nirapad Sarak Chair Elias Kanchan said a lack of training on human responsibility and behaviour can be noticed among the drivers in this regard.

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Apparently warning sign means nothing to these two, as they climb over it to cross this busy road at Mohakhali intersection, despite a foot-over bridge being only 25 to 30 yards away. Such way of jeopardising one's life just to save seconds has become a common sight on Dhaka roads. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

'DSA could harm our image globally'

Speakers tell dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Digital Security Act (DSA) could harm the country's image in the global arena, if it is not applied properly, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They raised the concern in a workshop, titled "Advocacy Dialogue: Awareness and Protection of Digital Citizenship and Rights", organised by Dnet and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom at a city hotel.

The speakers urged the government to clarify the vague definitions of various terms in the law, enhance law enforcers' capacity to contain cybercrime and help people use cyberspace responsibly to avert misuse of the internet.

Rights activists, journalists, lawyers and NGO representatives took part in the dialogue.

Faruk Faisal, regional director of Article-19, said there should have been a clear definition of the various clauses under DSA.

"The definition of cyber security and cybercrime should be clarified. If the law is applied with all these grey areas, it could jeopardise the image of the country in the

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20pc primary schools lack playgrounds

Shows data of Directorate of Primary Education

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty percent of the primary schools in the country do not have any playgrounds, according to the 2021 record of Directorate of Primary Education.

"According to the directorate's data, there are 65,566 government primary schools across the country, 54,826 of which have playgrounds," said Adil Mohammad Khan, executive director of Institute for Planning and Development (IPD), while presenting the keynote during a virtual dialogue -- organised by IPD -- yesterday.

He said in rural areas, there are no planned playgrounds in communities. The playgrounds of different schools meet the demands of a playground of the rural population. However, even that number is astonishingly low.

The planning criteria require one playground for children (3-6 years), one for teenagers (7-12 years) and one for adults (13 and above) for every 3 to 5 thousand people. However, that is far from the reality in the country's capital.

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A quarter century of despair

Speakers say sustainable peace yet to prevail in CHT as peace accord remains unimplemented



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sustainable peace is yet to be ensured at Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) as primary and important features of the CHT accord remain unimplemented, two decades after signing the accord.

Politicians, rights activists and academics made the remarks during a discussion marking 25 years of the CHT peace accord.

They also said people-oriented and environment-friendly development in the hills is hindered due to the absence of a "special governance system" in the area.

The discussion, titled "25 years of CHT accord: sustainable development, crisis and possibility of Chittagong Hill Tracts", was jointly organised by Kapaeng Foundation, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), ALRD and Bangladesh Adivasi Forum, at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Parbatya Chattagram Jana

Sanghaty Samity (PCJSS) President Santu Larma said most of the important clauses of the CHT accord remain implemented.

"I don't see any hope and possibility of the accord's full implementation during my lifetime. But the youth must see its full implementation. They should come forward with hope and desire," said Santu Larma, who signed the accord 25 years ago on behalf of PCJSS.

He urged all to come forward and ensure that special rights are given to the permanent inhabitants of the hill tracts area in the regional council and three hill divisions.

"It is the responsibility of the regional council to monitor and coordinate the development activities in the hills. But the council cannot play its role there since the legal framework of the regional council is not effective," said Santu Larma, also the chairman of CHT regional council.

Economist Debapriya

Bhattacharya, also the distinguished fellow at Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said, "When the peace accord was signed, there were expectations that many institutions will be set up. Some of them were set up, but they were not empowered. Many people in the hills are yet to be rehabilitated in line with the accord."

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said every year they have to repeat the same words about why the government has not taken the initiative to fully implement the accord even after its historic signing.

"When we raise this question, we are told that some clauses were implemented. When we review the clauses, we find the main clauses remain unimplemented," she said.

"There are a lot of reasons behind the frustrations of the people in the hills. Their human rights, dignity

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Give info on probe regarding Taqsem

HC asks ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought information from the ACC about the probe regarding Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan has been asked to submit a report to the HC today.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu passed the order while hearing a petition that challenged the legality of Taqsem's appointment.

During the hearing, Khurshid told the HC that the ACC is conducting a probe into some issues involving Taqsem.

Taqsem's lawyer Sayed Mahshib Hossain opposed the petition, saying another HC bench had earlier issued a rule on the issues. If the HC bench issues another rule, the respondents will be confused.

On Sunday, Supreme Court lawyer Syed Sayedul Haque Suman submitted the petition, saying Taqsem was appointed as MD through forgery as the marksheet of his viva voce for recruitment was tampered with.

'Take steps to regain people's trust in judiciary'

Pro-BNP lawyers urge chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Ainjibi Forum (BJAF), a body of pro-BNP lawyers, yesterday submitted an application to Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, urging him to "take necessary measures for restoring the image, dignity and prestige of the judiciary".

In the application, the BJAF leaders also requested the chief justice to "take steps to regain the public perception, faith and trust on the judiciary demonstrating that the same is free from political influence and to ensure that the political cases including the cases under the Digital Security Act, 2018 are dealt with in a manner which may regain public faith and trust in the judiciary".

A section of BJAF leaders including its President AJ Mohammad Ali and Secretary General Kayser Kamal met Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and handed over the application to him at his office in the Supreme Court.

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AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK HC starts hearing on death references

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has started hearing on the death references and appeals of the August 21 grenade attack cases filed after the gruesome attack was carried out on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka, leaving at least 24 people killed and 300 injured on that day (August 21) in 2004.

Then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, now the prime minister, narrowly escaped death in the incident.

The HC bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman began the hearing on the death references (trial court documents for confirmation of death) and appeals (filed by convicted accused) on Sunday with Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed, as a state counsel, reading out from the first information reports and charge sheets of the cases.

The HC bench continued the hearing yesterday and will resume the proceedings of the cases this morning, DAG Bashir Ahmed told The Daily Star.



Dengue death toll **257**

Total number of patients **58,927**

1,332 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **57,338**

308 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:15 12:45 3:45 5:19 7:00
JAMAT 5:50 1:15 4:00 5:22 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Cautious, a pedestrian walks on a dilapidated portion of the footpath next to Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. Numerous potholes have developed on the entire stretch of this busy walkway, while the authorities concerned continue to turn a blind eye. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

'Ganatantr Mukti Dibash' today

BSS, Dhaka

"Ganatantr Mukti Dibash" (Free Democracy Day) will be observed today, marking the fall of the then autocratic ruler in 1990.

On the eve of the day, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a message, greeted the country's people.

She said on this day in 1990, the autocratic government crumbled under pressure from the pro-democracy movement. "I pay respect to all the martyrs who sacrificed their lives to protect people's democratic rights," she said.

Anti-democratic forces are still hatching conspiracy to destroy democracy, the PM said. Hasina urged all to work together to thwart conspiracies to strengthen the foundation of democracy.