

HARASSMENT PREVENTION CELLS AT UNIVS

Members unaware, untrained: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although many educational institutions have formed a sexual harassment prevention committee after receiving a letter from the education ministry regarding the implementation of the 2009 HC guidelines, in reality, most of the committee members are unaware and untrained in their roles, revealed Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjaton Protirodh Jot (We Can) yesterday.

Although most of the committee members were supposed to be women, the reality is different, it added.

According to Amrai Pari Paribarik Nirjaton Protirodh Jot, only a few universities submit an annual report to the government on their performance.

Zinat Ara Haque, chief executive of We Can, shared this information at a roundtable, titled "Policies to Prevent Sexual Harassment in Educational Institution: Implementation and Barriers", organised by We Can, in association with UN Women Bangladesh, with financial support from Global Affairs, Canada.

The event was held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

"The monitoring mechanism is very weak at the government and non-

government level, especially, the national level monitoring mechanism is very much unclear in the polytechnic institutes," said Zinat.

We Can provided training on sexual harassment and sexual violence to the students, teachers, and staffers, of six educational institutions and formed different groups among the students to raise awareness regarding the issue, said the organisation.

Selina Akhter, assistant professor at Patuakhali Government College, said although a committee has been formed at her institution, students have not been filing complaints to the box.

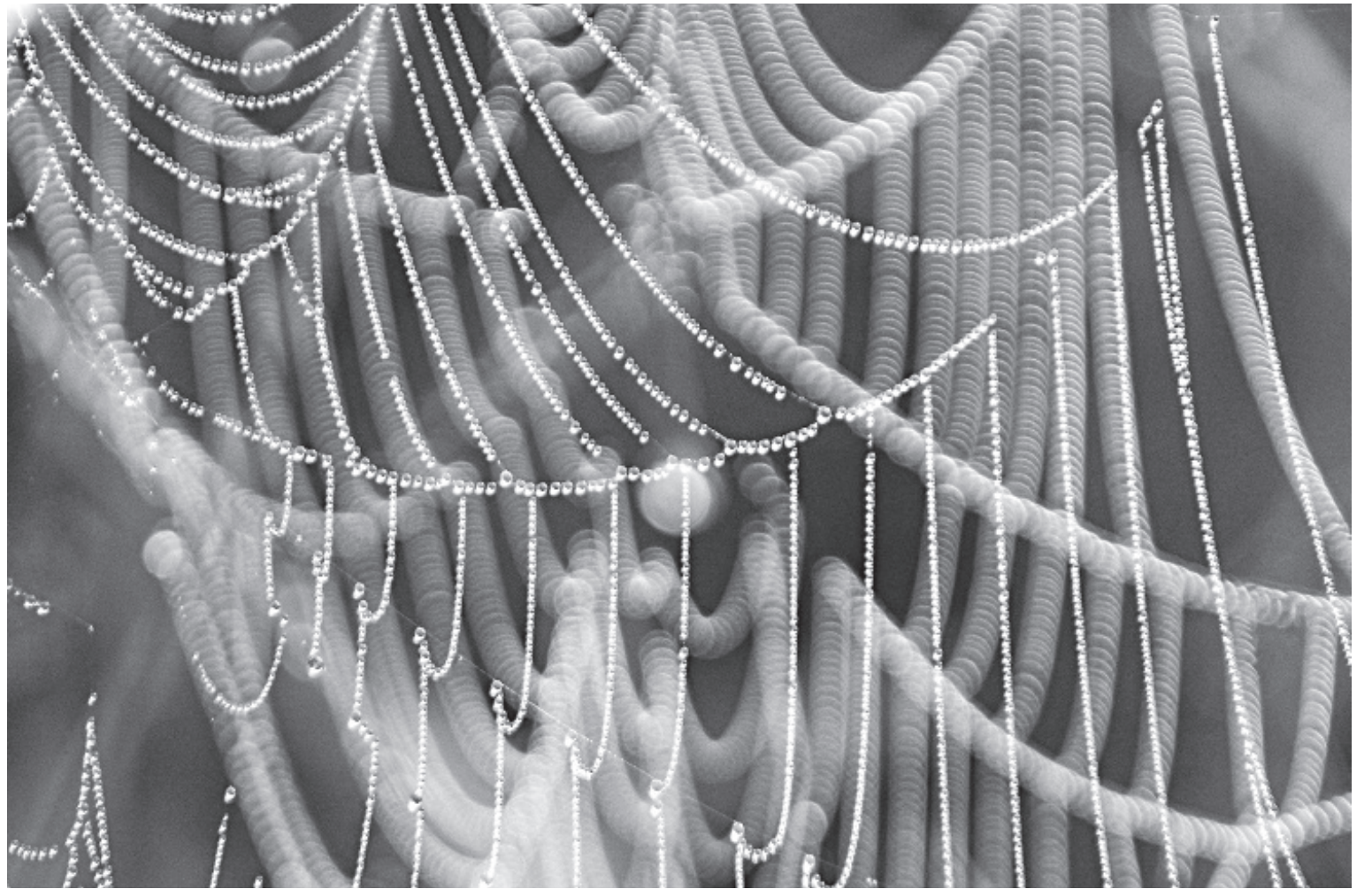
"I feel the students do not feel secure enough to complain, considering the social stigma and stereotype, which lead to further harassment," she said.

"I think the families must be included in these programmes for female students to get the confidence from their family members," added Selina.

Sujan Kanti Mali, associate professor at Patuakhali Science and Technology University, echoed the same.

"There is also a prevalent culture of moral policing that needs to be taken into account," he said.

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Small drops of dew accumulate on a spider's web -- painting an ideal picture for winter. One can catch a glimpse of such beauty early in the morning, when the fog greets the landscape. This photo was taken in Khulna's Batiaghata recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Former JU VC Prof Alauddin passes away

BSS, Dhaka

Liberation War veteran, academic and the prime minister's former adviser and lawmaker Prof Alauddin Ahmed died at a private hospital in Dhaka yesterday. He was 76.

"He had been under life support since December 1 following a heart attack and breathed his last at around 3:30pm," his relative Shawkat Osman told the news agency.

Prof Alauddin, a former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, left behind his wife, two daughters, a son, and a host of relatives, students and well-wishers to mourn his death.

On his retirement from the university, he appeared as a political figure and was elected as member of parliament from Pakundia-Hossainpur constituency in Kishoreganj.

He later served as the premier's adviser with the status of a minister. He

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Northern schools lagging behind

Reveals study on multilingual education



PHOTO: STAR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Compared to Chattogram's hill regions, schools in northern districts are lagging in distributing textbooks, educating in the mother tongue and teacher training programmes, to implement multilingual education, showed a study.

Researchers revealed this information in a programme, titled "Assessment of Multilingual Education (MLE) in the CHT and Plain Land" organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) in the capital's Brac Centre.

Rani Yan Yan, advisor of Chakma circle in Rajbari, Rajdweep and Rangamati, presented the keynote in the programme.

The number of trained teachers in multilingual education is much lower than necessary. The duration

of their training is also very short, she said during the presentation.

The report found that around 60 percent of students drop out of primary school due to economic, social, cultural and linguistic problems.

As the medium of education is Bengali, those textbooks look unfamiliar and unattractive to indigenous children.

The study also said around 162 indigenous students among 182 in the plain land did not receive MLE lessons and textbooks. They could not even read or write in their mother tongue.

The study identified some reasons behind the problems, which include -- a lack of clear guidelines from the government, inadequate training facilities for teachers, lack of qualified teachers and multilingual textbooks.

Attending as the chief guest, Mosammat Hamida Begum, secretary of the CHT affairs ministry, said, "If we can continue to teach our children in their mother tongue, they would get quality education."

She also termed the mother tongue as an intangible cultural heritage and urged on preserving it.

Attending as a guest of honour, Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, said, there has been a misconception among the people of CHT that they would not get the opportunity to pursue mainstream education or get good jobs if they receive education in their mother tongues.

"And hence, we need community mobilisation to create

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Three killed, one hurt in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and another was injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our local correspondents.

Two persons were killed and a woman was injured as a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and a truck collided head-on in Tarakanda upazila.

The accident happened around 11:00am on Mymensingh-Sherpur road, Tarakanda Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abul Khayer quoted locals as saying.

Hafizur Rahman (26), driver of the CNG-run auto-rickshaw; and Sohagh Mondol (30), a passenger, succumbed to their injuries at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, said police.

Police sent the bodies to the MMCH morgue for autopsy.

Police seized the truck and arrested its driver Sagor Mia (20), who is from Phulbaria upazila.

A case was lodged with the police station.

Meanwhile, a bicyclist was killed as a truck hit him in Gomostapur upazila.

Muntaj Ali (75) from Benichak village in Gomostapur died on the spot. Gomostapur Police Station OC Mahbubur Rahman said the victim was going to his village home from a local bazar.

Fire breaks out at BM depot again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A fire broke out at BM Container Depot at Sitakunda in Chattogram yesterday, just five months after a deadly inferno took place inside the warehouse.

The blaze started at a shed of the depot around 3:00pm, said Siraj Miah, station master of Kumira Fire Service Station.

The firefighters brought the blaze under control in less than half an hour.

No casualties were reported, he said. Siraj Miah said, "On information, two firefighting units rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control..."

The cause of the fire and the extent of damage can be ascertained after investigation, he added.

On June 4, a total of 51 people were killed and over 200 injured in a devastating fire and

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NAYAPALTAN CLASH
105 BNP men denied bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail petitions of 105 activists of BNP's front organisations in a case filed over the December 7 clash in the capital's Nayapaltan.

Dhaka Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Tofazzal Hossain passed the order after the defence submitted bail petitions on Monday.

Another Dhaka court on Monday rejected bail petitions of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, standing committee member Mirza Abbas, and 222 others in the same case.

During yesterday's hearing, defence told the court that their clients were not involved in the incident, but were implicated in the case and they should be granted bail.

The front organisations are: Jatiyatabadi Juba

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Duta polls on December 29

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) election will be held on December 29 to elect the executive council for 2023, as per the election schedule.

Pro-Awami League teachers will contest the polls under "Blue Panel" and pro-BNP teachers under "White Panel", said insiders. The voting would be held at Dhaka University Club.

Faculty of Pharmacy Dean Prof Sitesh Chandra Bachar will function as the election commissioner.

The two panels are yet to finalise their candidates.

Blue panel convener Prof Abdus Samad told The Daily Star, "It will be known within December 17 who will get nomination... against 15 posts."

On the other hand, white panel convener Prof Lutfur Rahman said, "We hope that within two days [December 14 or 15] we can announce our candidates' names."

In the last Duta election held on December 30 in 2021, the blue panel won 14 posts while the white panel only one.

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Sending children to school making jute ropes

2 orgs helping Chilmari women become skilled workers

S DILIP ROY

Rasheda Beram (28), a mother of two and a homemaker of a poor family in Kurigram's Chilmari upazila barely forgot the last time she spent a day with a smile on her face.

Poverty was her daily companion, and she was totally dependent on her husband for money, who worked as a day labourer.

The money her husband earned wasn't enough to run their family of four. Her children rarely had food on their plates three times a day, and education remained a distant dream for them.

But Rasheda's story didn't end there.

Last month, an NGO offered her training opportunities to make jute ropes and earn some money.

At present, she's earning Tk 60-80 every day by making jute ropes at home, which are later used to make different products like women's clothes, bags, mattresses and so forth.

Rasheda said she spends 3-4 hours a day making jute ropes. The raw materials are supplied from the NGO.

"Now my earnings are of great benefit to the family. I have started sending my children to school," Rasheda said.



PHOTO: STAR

Making jute ropes has brought smiles to the faces of Kurigram's Chilmari women, as they are now earning Tk 50-60 a day through the work. With this money, they're no longer dependent on their husbands and can send their children to school. This photo was taken recently.