

ICT to quiz Palak over internet shutdown

DU CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday allowed its investigation agency to interrogate former state minister Zunaïd Ahmed Palak.

The agency will interrogate him over allegations linked to internet service disruptions during the July uprising.

The ICT will also interrogate him about the actions involving plans for genocide, removal of evidence, and isolate Bangladesh globally through internet blackout.

ICT, led by its chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Majumdar, passed the orders after the prosecution

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A dense layer of fog blanketed the streets in the Dhaka University area early in the morning. The sight of fog instead of smog in Dhaka is a welcome change and a clear sign of winter's arrival. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Timor-Leste president due tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Timor-Leste President José Ramos Horta is coming to Bangladesh in the first ever state visit starting tomorrow, marking a "historic milestone" in the bilateral relations between the two nations.

He will be accompanied by 18 members, including Minister of Foreign Affairs, president's chief adviser, and other senior officials.

"We are optimistic that this visit will be a successful and fruitful one," said Foreign Secretary Md Jashim Uddin at a briefing at the ministry yesterday.

During this visit, he will participate in the Victory Day celebrations.

The unseen trauma of July heroes

Speakers call for providing mental health support to survivors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salman Hossain, a student of Titumir College, sustained bullet injuries on a leg during the July uprising.

Following surgery, he discovered that the injured leg has gotten shorter than the other, making it impossible for him to walk normally. "I fell into depression afterwards," said Salman, while sharing his story at a seminar.

The seminar, titled "Mental Health Crisis: Dealing with Post-July Revolutionary Aspects," was organised by Aachol Foundation at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

NIMH SURVEY ON INJURED PROTESTERS

- » 75pc suffer depression
- » 27.3pc severe depression
- » 54.5pc anxiety symptoms
- » 58.2pc stress signs
- » Study sample: 55
- » Age range: 14-50

Salman said his mental health has further deteriorated as many keep trying to ridicule and discredit the uprising.

Salman's story is not unique.

Many injured individuals, along with families of the deceased and witnesses of the uprising, are grappling with mental trauma and related disorders, said speakers at the seminar.

They referred to a recent survey by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), which showed that 75 percent of individuals injured during protests suffer from depression, with 27.3 percent experiencing severe depression.

Additionally, 54.5 percent exhibited anxiety symptoms, and 58.2 percent displayed signs of stress or psychological strain. The

study involved 55 injured, aged 14 to 50.

Ignoring the mental health aspect might result in severe long-term consequences for those involved in the uprising, speakers also said.

Presenting the keynote paper, Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, professor of Clinical Psychology at Dhaka University, said potential mental health issues stemming from the uprising may include Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, stress-related behaviors, personality changes, and a loss of hope due to physical disabilities.

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Cybersecurity ordinance draft gets approval

UNB, Dhaka

The Council of Advisers has granted its preliminary approval for the draft of the Cybersecurity Ordinance, 2024.

The ordinance, which aims to strengthen the nation's cybersecurity framework, is a significant step towards enhancing digital security and protecting citizens from online threats.

The draft will need to be presented again for final approval before it becomes a law.

Once enacted, officials said, the ordinance will provide a robust legal structure for addressing cybersecurity issues in Bangladesh, ensuring greater protection for both public and private sector digital assets.

They said the government stresses the importance of this ordinance in safeguarding the nation's online infrastructure from evolving cyber threats.

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New ACC springs into action

Sues 6 ex-cabinet members

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly-formed Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) in its first meeting yesterday decided to file six cases.

The accused of these cases include three cabinet members of the previous Awami League government.

The meeting also decided to appeal for a travel ban on at least 25 people, including former ministers and lawmakers, and to confiscate properties of at least 10 people.

Akhtar Hossain, director general (prevention) of ACC, disclosed the information during a press briefing yesterday.

"The cases have been filed today [yesterday] based on preliminary inquiries. If additional assets are discovered domestically or internationally during the investigation, those will be included," he said.

In these cases, former health minister Zahid Maleque has been accused of acquiring assets worth Tk 61.56 crore, and his son Rahat Malek of Tk 11.84 crore; former state minister for ICT Zunaïd Ahmed Palak and his wife Arifa Jasmine have

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Speakers at a roundtable discussion titled "Sustainable Plastic Solution in Food and Health Systems" at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The event was organised by The Daily Star and Unilever Bangladesh, with the collaboration of Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Plastic ban won't work without alternatives

Say experts, stress on waste management

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banning plastic alone will not provide any solutions unless the government brings proper alternatives and enacts relevant laws, said speakers during a roundtable discussion yesterday.

They also emphasised that authorities must focus on waste management rather than merely banning plastic or polythene, which was already prohibited decades back.

The remarks came at a roundtable, titled "Sustainable Plastic Solution in Food and Health Systems", organised by The Daily Star and Unilever Bangladesh, with the collaboration of Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition at The Daily Star Centre.

GM Reza Sumon, project manager and lead at GAIN, delivered the keynote presentation.

Buet Professor Ijaz Hossain said, "Plastic is available in almost all countries. What they do is manage it's pollution, manage the waste or recycle."

"In our country, the government has not taken any significant initiatives other than banning plastics. Additionally, we have failed to enhance or promote existing alternatives. If we can't succeed in this, banning plastics will achieve nothing," he said.

"Besides, we haven't shown sufficient strictness in raising awareness about the use of plastics. If we had managed plastics and their pollution effectively, the government might not have needed to impose a ban," he added.

Prof Md Raknuzzaman, vice-chancellor of Jamalpur Science and Technology University, said, "To ban

Plastic is everywhere in the world. They manage it; we ban it. Without a proper waste management system, bans are ineffective. The problem isn't plastic itself, but the lack of proper management and recycling initiatives.

IJAZ HOSSAIN, Buet Professor

plastic, you need to prepare alternatives. If you don't, it will lead to chaos."

"Without policy changes to address the surge in plastic usage, no significant progress can be made," he added.

Rudaba Khondker, country director of National Nutrition Services (NNS) at GAIN, said, "We identified several

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Govt to form taskforce over air pollution

Says Rizwana

BSS, Dhaka

The government will soon form a task force to tackle air pollution, environment, said Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday.

Speaking at an inter-ministerial meeting at the Secretariat, she said the task force would operate until the next monsoon as part of intensified efforts to curb pollution in Dhaka and surrounding areas during the dry season.

Rizwana said some areas would be declared "No Brickfield Zones" to address emissions from kilns. She added that older vehicles would be removed from roads within six months, and police have been instructed to restrict open trucks from entering the capital.

"Sources of air pollution are being identified, and strict measures are being taken to control dust from construction sites, emissions from brick kilns,

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