

'Dangerous forces' are endangering democracy

Says Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday voiced deep concern over the rise of what he described as dangerous forces in the country, saying they pose a serious threat to democracy, religious freedom, and cultural diversity.

"What we are witnessing now is the rise of forces that are dangerous to democracy, dangerous to democratic values, and a threat to the religious faith of our people," he said while speaking at a discussion and doa mahfil.

The programme was organised by Diploma Engineers Association of Bangladesh at the Institution of Diploma

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**TYPHOID VACCINE**  
90 lakh children registered so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 90 lakh children have so far been registered as the government prepares to launch its first-ever typhoid vaccination campaign on October 12.

The health authorities have set a target of bringing 4.9 crore children aged between nine months and 15 years under the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI).

Online registration for the vaccine began on August 1. To register, one must visit <https://vaxepi.gov.bd> and provide the 17-digit birth registration number. The registration for vaccination is currently ongoing.

The guardians need to have their children registered for the vaccine.

After registration, a digital vaccination card will be issued, which has to be presented at the designated centre to receive the vaccine.

Children without a birth registration certificate can be registered directly at vaccination centres.

According to officials, the campaign will be conducted in all educational institutions during the first 10 working days from October 12, followed by the next eight working days

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People from all walks of life paid their last respects to Farida Parveen by placing wreaths on her coffin at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday. The 'Queen of Lalon Geeti' passed away on Saturday at the age of 70, leaving behind a legacy that transcends generations and is deeply rooted in the rich soil of Bangladeshi folk music. Her body reached Kushtia around 8:30pm and she was laid to rest in her parents' grave at the municipal graveyard following a namaz-e-janaza after the Esha prayers.

PHOTO: STAR

## Children left alone at home vulnerable offline, online

Speakers urge stronger steps to protect children of working parents from harm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called for stronger government and private sector initiatives to protect children left at home by their working parents from harm in both the physical world and cyberspace.

They said while such children are vulnerable to various forms of physical violence, they are also highly at risk online due to lack of knowledge, especially during the daytime in the absence of their parents.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands, with support from Breaking the Silence (BTS) and Village Education Resource Centre, organised the discussion at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

At the event, Terre des Hommes Country Manager in Bangladesh Nazrul Islam said although the government has enacted several laws and undertaken various policies, child protection is still "largely neglected" in the country.

He stressed that stakeholders must come forward and demonstrate responsibility to improve the situation, since legislation alone is not sufficient.

Zahidul Islam, director (programme and planning) at Breaking the Silence, said many RMG factories have daycare facilities but those are inadequate compared to the number of

working parents.

"This inadequacy could harm the parents' dedication in providing quality service and subsequently impact the sector negatively," said Zahidul, who moderated the discussion.

INCIDIN Bangladesh Executive Director AKM Masud Ali said there are parents who leave their

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen child protection mechanisms
- Ensure sufficient daycare facilities in RMG factories
- Involve trade unions, civic groups, industries in protection efforts
- Raise awareness among parents, children
- Provide counselling for child victims of virtual harm
- Make effective use of "109" helpline

children back home in rural areas for months while they seek fortune in cities like Dhaka. Strengthening protection mechanisms for such left-behind children is also crucial, he said.

A tripartite initiative involving government infrastructures, the economic strength of the industry sector, and civic platforms

could provide sustainability to child protection mechanisms in Bangladesh, he added, emphasising the need to involve trade union groups in the process.

SM Taifur Rahman, deputy director at Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, said just like the physical world, children should also be made aware of keeping distance from unknown individuals in cyberspace.

"Virtual harm could be as severe as physical harm," he said, stressing the need for generating awareness among parents about online safety and ensuring counselling and motivation for victims.

Roisul Islam, project manager at the Multisectoral Programme of the Women and Children Affairs Ministry, said they receive about 6,000 phone calls on average per day on the "109" helpline service, mostly concerning domestic violence, sexual harassment, and violence against children.

He said officials document the complaints and take action based on the merit of the problems by involving local administration until those are resolved.

Abdul Hamid Mia, director (administration and finance) at the Department of Social Services, and Roksana Sultana, general secretary of Breaking the Silence, also spoke at the discussion.

He said officials document the complaints and take action based on the merit of the problems by involving local administration until those are resolved.

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