

ATTACK ON JOURNO

Fellow journalists demand punishment of attacker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Journalists in Tangail formed a human chain in the town yesterday, demanding arrest and exemplary punishment to the attacker of journalist Fazlur Rahman, Ghatail upazila correspondent of Bangla Daily Jugantor.

To press home their demand, journalists from different print and electronic media and online portals took part at the hour-long rally held in front of Tangail Press Club yesterday noon.

Speakers at the rally condemned the attack on Fazlur while performing his professional duties and demanded immediate arrest of alleged culprit Haidor Ali, chairman of Ghatail Sadar Union Parishad (UP).

They gave a 24-hour ultimatum to arrest the culprit, otherwise, threatened to go for a tougher agitation.

They also urged the authorities concern to remove Haidor from the chairman post.

Among others, Zafar Ahmed and Kazi Jakerul Maula, president and general secretary of Tangail Press Club respectively, Mohammad Ashraf Ali, former joint secretary of Jatiya Press Club, and Mohammad Nuruzzaman Miah, general secretary of Ghatail Press Club, spoke at the rally.

Mentionable, recently Haidor allegedly cut down some government owned roadside trees and sold those illegally.

On Thursday, journalist Fazlur went to the office of Ghatail upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and asked his comment over the issue.

Haidor, who was present there at that time, physically assaulted Fazlur in front of the UNO.

Later, injured Fazlur filed a case with Ghatail Police Station against Haidor.



A hill affected by silica sand extraction in Mirzapur area under Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar. Below, an earthen road, made for movement of vehicles carrying the item from the area.

PHOTO: MINTUDESHWARA

Hills under threat as silica sand lifting unabated

Official ban fails to prevent unscrupulous men from the callous act

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Mindless extraction of silica sand in Mirzapur area under Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar poses threat to environment and ecology.

A gang of influential sand lifters has destroyed several hills in Gollachipatila in Mirzapur union during the last four months, Javed Bhuiyan, joint convener of Lawachhara Bon O Jibaboichitra Rokkha Andolon, told this correspondent.

“They are extracting silica by managing some corrupt officials as there is huge demand for silica in the glass factories in Habiganj and other areas,” he said.

A sand lifter, on condition of anonymity, said after selecting a hilly area for silica sand lifting they make a verbal agreement with the relevant local UP member.

Sand Quarry and Soil Management Act, 2012, prohibits sand extraction in a hilly area.

Visiting the area, this correspondent found that hills with thousands of trees are becoming victims due to loosening of earth as a consequence of the sand lifting. Huge piles of silica sand were found near

the spots. A newly-made earthen road was found in Mirzapur area for movement of silica sand carrying vehicles.

Several locals seeking anonymity said local Mirzapur union parishad (UP) member Monu Mia’s son Al Amin and Ronju Mia, a resident of Gollachipatila in Mirzapur union, are involved in illegal sale of silica sand for long, while Ahad Mia, local member of Bunovir UP acts as their accomplice.

Asked about the allegation, Ranju Mia said the hill is his property.

UP member Ahad Mia refuted the allegation against him and said some locals are plotting against him to damage his goodwill.

UP member Monu Mia and his son Al Amin could not be contacted for their comments.

Badrul Huda, assistant director at the Department of Environment (DoE) in Moulvibazar, said they visited Gollachipatila hilly area in Mirzapur union recently and found that silica sand lifting continued there.

“Around a month ago, an official of Bunovir union land office filed a case



against the sand lifters. We issued a notice on January 22, asking Al Amin, Ahad Mia and Ranju Mia to stop silica sand lifting but they have continued the callous act,” he added.

Shah Shaheda Akther, Sylhet divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said, “Following a writ petition from Bela, the High Court earlier ordered leasing for silica extraction 51 spots in Moulvibazar district. The spots include Murachhara, Jaitachhara, Isamotichhara, Bilashchhara, Aliachhara, Naranyanchhara, Udnachhara, Langlichhara, Jagchhara (west), Jagchhara (east) areas belonging to the forest department.”

But some local influential people have continued sand extraction from hilly areas, she added.

Abdul Karim Kim, executive member of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), said the continued sand lifting badly affects the environment but the authorities concerned have hardly taken any action.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar Mamunur Rashid said, “We realized fine of Tk 55 lakh from illegal sand lifters in Sreemangal upazila last year. We need help from all quarters to prevent the illegal sand lifting and preserve our resources.”

Dense fog suspends ferry service for 10 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Ferry services on Shimulia-Kathalbari route in the Padma river resumed yesterday after a suspension of over 10 hours due to poor visibility caused by dense fog.

Abdul Alim, general manager of BWTC at Kathalbari in Madaripur, said after 10:00pm on Saturday, the density of fog started to rise gradually in the river and the ferry services were suspended around 1:00am yesterday. The ferry services resumed around 11:00am as the fog disappeared, he said.

Around 700 vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the ghat.

No Shaheed Minar at 650 Jashore pry schools

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Most of the government primary schools in Jashore are without any Shaheed Minar, a monument to commemorate the martyrs of 1952 Language Movement.

According to Jashore district education office sources, 650 out of 900 government primary schools in Jashore have no Shaheed Minar.

Of 650 schools, 77 are in Sadar upazila, 65 in Bagharpara, 86 in Avaynagar, 84 in Jhikargachha, 60 in Chougachha upazila, 138 in Monirampur, 60 in Sharsha and the rest in Keshabpur upazila.

Students at some of these institutions build makeshift Shaheed Minars to pay tribute to the Language Movement martyrs.

Rahima Khatun, a student of Dattapara Government Primary School in Sadar upazila, said “We can’t pay tribute to the Language Movement martyrs on February 21 every year as there is no Shaheed Minar on the school premises.

Abdul Jabbar, headmaster of the school, said it is true that there is no Shaheed Minar at the school.

They could not construct Shaheed Minar on the institution premises due to lack of fund, said the headmaster.

Sadar Upazila Education Officer Kamruzzaman Jahangir said 77 government primary schools in the upazila have no Shaheed Minar. They have made a list of these institutions and sent it to the district education officer.

ASM Abdul Khalek, the district education officer, said they are trying to manage government funds to construct Shaheed Minars at the schools.

Shammi Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Jashore, said many schools could not construct Shaheed Minars because they have no space.

They will take necessary steps to construct Shaheed Minars at all educational institutions in the district, said Shammi Islam.



Visitors browse through books at a stall during a book fair in Moulvibazar’s Barlekha upazila yesterday. Nazrul Academy, Barlekha unit, organised the day-long fair at Barlekha Girls’ High School premises, about 78 kilometres from Moulvibazar town.

PHOTO: MINTUDESHWARA

Plight of a national hero

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Khandakar Abdul Malek Shahidullah was only seventeen in 1952 when the wave of protests during the Language Movement shook the country.

That same year, ninth-grader Shahidullah and eight other students of his school, Cooperative High School in Jamalpur’s Dewanganj, were expelled by the authorities for taking part in a procession in Dewanganj town along with a number of other students.

Endorsed by his father, a medical officer of railway in the town, young Shahidullah stood defiant and rejected the offer of reinstatement of his student status at the school by seeking clemency to the school authorities.

The defiant Language Movement veteran went on to become a member of the provincial assembly in 1970 and later on, an organiser of the Liberation War in 1971. When the country’s first president Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam was president of Awami League’s Greater Mymensingh unit, Shahidullah served as the organising secretary of the unit.

At 85 years of age, this national hero now has nothing but the freedom fighter’s monthly allowance to support his family, residing in Nandibari area of Muktagachha town in Mymensingh, and cover for his medical expenses due to multiple brain strokes that he suffered last year.

Shahidullah’s right arm and leg became paralysed after the first stroke in October, 2019 and he became completely bedridden after the second stroke two months later, on December 13, said his wife Suraiya Malek.

After he suffered the last stroke, he was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital from where he was released 10 days later.

Along with other longstanding



Bedridden language movement veteran Khandakar Abdul Malek Shahidullah looks at a crest at his house in Nandibari area of Muktagachha town in Mymensingh recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

health conditions, including respiratory and heart diseases, Shahidullah has been suffering from speech impediment since the last stroke.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the government’s handling of the national heroes of the country, Suraiya said it is beyond imagination that a language movement hero of the country is left in such a miserable state.

“It is beyond our capacity to ensure better treatment for him as the family mainly depends on his monthly freedom fighter’s allowance. The government should take responsibility of Shahidullah’s treatment.”

Khandakar Monjur Malek Sudipta, the youngest son of Shahidullah, said, “On various occasions, we sought national recognition for his contribution to

the Language Movement as well as to the Liberation War, but no one paid heed.”

It is painful to watch that a national hero like Shahidullah is passing days without proper treatment while his family members cannot afford better treatment for him, said Abul Kashem, former commander of Muktiyoddha Sangsad’s Muktagachha upazila unit.

Shahidullah was active in social work from a young age and he never pursued affluence for himself or his family, Kashem lamented.

Contacted, Muktagachha Upazila Nirbahi Officer Suborna Sarker, also administrator of Muktiyoddha Sangsad in the upazila, said she visited Shahidullah recently and the government will provide urgent financial assistance for the language movement veteran.