



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WHO EVEN NEEDS A RED LIGHT ANYMORE... A man leads his family through the busy streets of Shahbagh. Child in one hand, he's waving his other hand for the bus in front of them to stop. Whether the driver notices this or not decides how safely they cross the road. Right, at Jurain, a rickshaw puller finds his boarded vehicle stranded between two buses. What's worse, he's actually facing the other way, meaning that he was travelling a bus-plying road down the wrong side. The photos were taken yesterday.

DELHI VIOLENCE Tarnishing values of Indian constitution

Say speakers at human chain

Condemning recent attacks on minorities in India's Delhi, speakers at a human chain yesterday said such incidents are tarnishing the values of the Indian constitution, which principally upholds a non-communal spirit.

They said Bangladeshi citizens will not accept any incident of attack on minorities anywhere in the world, even in Bangladesh.

Cultural personalities, rights activists and student leaders stood and spoke in front of National Museum at the capital's Shahbagh. At least 100 people under the banner "Jongibad o Shamprodaikota Protirodh Morcha", a platform to fight militancy and communalism, protested the violence in Delhi.

"We condemn the attacks on minorities in India; we'll continue this movement against communalism no matter where it occurs. We should first ensure security of minorities in our own country," said Sammilita Sangskritik Jote President Golam Kuddus.

He said the role of law enforcers during the attacks in India was questionable.

"I hope Muslims get justice; we can't accept such heinous incidents, though we're thankful to them [India] for helping us in 1971," he said.

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Taking on the challenges of water and sanitation

In conversation with country director of WaterAid Bangladesh

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

With a 25-year illustrious career in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector, Hasin Jahan was appointed the country director of WaterAid Bangladesh last year.

Prior to this appointment, she has held key positions in Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Danish International Development Agency, WSP Global, International Training Network Centre-Buet, and WaterAid. Her last role was as country director of Practical Action.

An industry expert and veteran in the development sector, Jahan spoke with The Daily Star about the challenges in WASH and the way forward.

How do you feel about the new position?

This is a big responsibility, bringing with it as many challenges as possibilities. But if there's no challenge, there's no thrill. In WaterAid, I have to closely work with policymakers, so there's a lot of scope for innovation. I'd say I'm quite enjoying this role.

Safe water and sanitation is a global issue, and of large interest in Bangladesh. What is your evaluation about the WASH sector of the country? There are two perspectives here -- some think there's no shortage of water in the country, after all, everything sinks during floods. There are also the stats indicating that we've achieved 100 percent sanitation, and open defecation is down by a standard level, so there's a common perception that water and sanitation is not a big enough issue.

However, if you go deeper and consider the sustainable development goal-6 of ensuring clean water and sanitation, we still have a long way to go. Around 13 percent people in the country are still at risk of arsenic. Two crore people in coastal regions are battling rising levels of salinity, which is a growing problem due to climate change.

How can these problems be solved? Quality and quantity are two problems with water. There are separate water management systems in rural and urban areas. Here we need an overall revision in planning.

Currently, National Water and Sanitation Strategy is under revision in light of SDGs and in its final stage. The strategy has suggestions to take special

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Hasin Jahan

initiatives -- subsidy, special projects and management etc for remote areas.

Do you think equal allocation of government fund for every region would work?

Obviously not. Hydro-geologically, the country is divided into several regions. In hill tracts where population density is low, there is a need for special technology -- gravity flow system to collect drinking water. This needs several lakh taka to set up while the maintenance cost is also very high. The government has to take stratified decision for fund allocation in separate regions.

Despite Dhaka Wasa producing safe water and supplying it to city dwellers, we often observe cases of waterborne disease. What could be the reason behind this? In most cases, water is fresh in its source. However, it often becomes contaminated during transportation, and this continues up to filling it into a glass. So here comes the issue of a step-by-step water safety plan. There is a need for national level campaign to keep water safe in every step.

Waste of water is evident everywhere from households to public places. How can this issue be tackled? This needs special attention; Wasa, development partners, everyone should work on it. A national level communication campaign should be initiated. Normally such campaigns are too expensive for organisations like us. The government and donors can do it jointly. Also, children should be taught not to waste water.

Another faulty system for Dhaka city

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Two to die for killing 2 minors in Demra

JNU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced two persons to death for killing two five-year-old girls in the capital's Demra on January 7 last year.

Judge Jayasree Sammader of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal-3 in Dhaka delivered the judgement in presence of the convicts -- Golam Mostofa (28) and Azizul Bawany alias Azizul Bowly (28).

The court also fined them Tk 50,000 each. The victims' families would equally get the fined money, the judgement said.

On January 7 last year, Nusrat Jahan, daughter of Palash Howlader; and Fariha Akter Dola, daughter of Faridul Islam, went missing after they went out from their homes in Demra's Konapara for playing.

Later, their bodies were found in Golam Mostofa's house.

Palash Howlader filed a case in this regard with Demra Police Station under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act on January 8 that year.

The murders sparked protests in Demra.

According to the case documents, Mostofa and his friend Azizul Bawany lured the girls into Mostofa's house.

At one stage, they tried to rape the girls. As they started screaming, Azizul and Mostofa strangled them.

Palash Howlader, who was present at the courtroom yesterday, told The Daily Star that he wanted speedy execution of the verdict.

74 children raped last month

Mahila Parishad report says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday said there were 337 reports of torture and sexual violence against women and girls in February.

At least 114 rape incidents were reported where 80 were raped, 24 gang-raped, nine were murdered after rape and one killed herself after rape, according to data collected from reports published in 14 national newspapers.

Among the rape victims, 74 were children, according to a press release issued by Mahila Parishad.

Forty-three women were killed in different circumstances last month. Twenty-two were pushed to the point to die by suicide due to torture. Nine women suffered torture by husbands and in-laws for dowry. Three of them were killed.

There were also 13 incidents of abduction and one trafficking. Some 18 incidents of child marriage were reported of which 16 such marriages were prevented. At least 10 women faced sexual harassment, seven others fell victim to cyber related crimes. One woman was forced to marriage.

Stolen from Dhaka, recovered in Gaibandha

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

On February 28 around 7:50pm, Divisional Special Judge of Barisal of Mohsinul Haque hired a rickshaw from a programme at Kakrail to his residence on Dilu Road.

It was a 20-minute journey, and it almost ended smoothly if the rickshaw-puller didn't create some last-minute chaos by demanding extra fare.

Amidst the back and forth, Mohsinul forgot to pick up his backpack, which had a laptop, DSLR camera, a cellphone, and some important documents. It took him a little while to realise his mistake, but by then the rickshaw-puller had already disappeared.

He immediately filed a general diary with Hatirjheel Police Station. In a moment's notice, police formed two separate teams to recover the backpack.

The teams, led by Sub-inspector Khairul Islam and Assistant Sub-inspector Tariqul Islam, soon set out looking for the rickshaw-puller.

After 72 hours and over 100 CCTV footage checks, the DMP officials managed to recover the items, unscratched.

The drive was extensive and stretched across district boundaries. It led the teams all the way to Gaibandha, Biplob

Bijoy Talukder, deputy commissioner of Tejgaon Division police, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We are now looking for the thieves. Although they left the loot behind, they managed to evade arrest," he added.

Police checked the CCTV footage to first identify the rickshaw-puller. Mohsinul assisted the police by collecting footage from different places, said police.

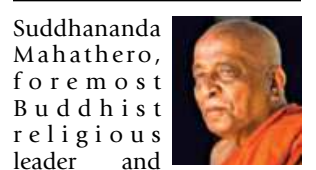
After identifying the puller, police started inquiring about his garage and location by going through even more footage, police said. After some effort, they were able to pin down the garage. Police set out for the location but found that the rickshaw-puller was not there.

However, as one stream dried, another started flowing. Trying to connect to Mohsinul's cellphone, police found it active, running on another SIM. The person on the opposite side told police the backpack is all the way in Gaibandha.

After a round of location tracing, police finally recovered the backpack from a third-party possession. Safe and sound the stolen items will be handed over to Mohsinul tomorrow after some documentation work, police officials said.

Suddhananda Mahathero passes away

Bss, Dhaka



Suddhananda Mahathero, foremost Buddhist religious leader and chief abbot of Kamalapur Dharmarajika Buddhist Mahabihar, passed away yesterday morning while undergoing treatment at a hospital in the city.

He was 87, clinic and monastery sources said.

He had been suffering from respiratory obstruction, diabetes and other old-age complications.

Mahathero is survived by countless disciples, relatives and a host of Buddhist monks and admirers.

According to monastery sources, his body will be

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Washington, DC to observe 'Mujib Year'

UNB, Dhaka

The mayor of Washington, DC has declared March 17, 2020 to March 17, 2021 as "Mujib Year", which will celebrate the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

DC Mayor Muriel Bowser issued a proclamation in the US capital on Monday, congratulating Bangladeshi citizens on this special occasion, said the Bangladesh embassy in Washington.

It says the US State Department cites Bangladesh as "a global example of a democratic, tolerant, pluralistic, and moderate nation" whose friendship is vital to the US.

It also says the Bangladesh embassy has contributed to the growth and cultural diversity of Washington, DC.

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How they got licence to carry arms?

HC on GK Shamim's bodyguards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know how the bodyguards of GK Shamim, a top government-listed contractor, got licences for arms and how many firearms they have.

The court asked their lawyer Shamim Sarder to place the detailed information before it tomorrow.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam came up with the order while hearing a rule issued by this court over granting bail to the bodyguards in a money laundering case.

On February 3, the bench issued the rule asking the government and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to explain why the four accused -- Zahidul Islam, Shahidul Islam, Kamal Hossain and Samsad Hossain -- should not be granted bail in the case.

Rab arrested GK Shamim, who is known to be a Jubo League leader, on September 20 last year on charges of extortion and tender manipulation. His seven bodyguards, including the four accused, were also arrested at the time.

During the September 20 raid by the elite force at Shamim's house and office in the city's Niketon, eight firearms, a huge amount of ammunition, fixed deposit receipts worth Tk 165 crore and around Tk 1.8 crore in cash, a large stash of US and Singaporean dollars and some foreign liquor were seized.



A discussion titled "#EachforEqual: Celebrating International Women's Day 2020" was held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. It was jointly organised by LankaBangla Finance Limited and The Daily Star. PHOTO: STAR

Ishraque files lawsuit for cancellation of DSCC polls

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ishraque Hossain, who contested the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) polls for the post of mayor from BNP, filed a lawsuit with an election tribunal in Dhaka yesterday, demanding cancellation of the February 1 election.

Judge Utpal Bhattacharya accepted the suit and will pass an order later today on summoning the defendants, Advocate Taherul Islam Tauhid confirmed to The Daily Star.

The chief election commissioner, commission's secretary, winner candidate Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh and five others have been made defendants to contest the suit.

In the suit, Ishraque

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