



The Daily Star



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BANGLADESH UPDATE 2,131 New cases in 24hrs | 3,08,925 Total cases | 4,206 Deaths | 198,863 Recoveries | **GLOBAL UPDATE** 843,096 Deaths | 25,013,265 Total cases

INT'L DAY OF THE VICTIMS OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

TRUTH DWELLS in their silence

Victims who return never talk about what happened to them; state's failure to ensure their protection to blame, say experts

ZYMA ISLAM and NILIMA ZAHAN

Shafiqul Islam Kajol was missing for 53 days, discovered by law enforcers roaming the India-Bangladesh border in Benapole in the middle of the night, subsequently thrown in jail and denied bail for 3 months -- and yet the only investigation being done by the state is about a Facebook post by Kajol.

Kajol disappeared on March 10 after ruling party lawmaker Saifuzzaman Shikhor sued him under the Digital Security Act for a Facebook post. Pertinent questions about where he was and who took him, his whole two months of enforced disappearance are currently swept under the rug.

The onus of revealing that information has been put on the family -- and even as Kajol's family wages daily protests online and offline to free his father, not a toot is let out about where Kajol was.

Kajol is now accused in three cases filed under the Digital Security Act.

Of the 550 people who fell victim to enforced disappearances over the last 10 years, at least 305 returned alive and either landed in jail or went back to their homes and never talked publicly about where they were taken or what happened to them during the days, weeks, months and even years of their disappearance.

"Why can't those who come back, ever speak out? The state is not protecting them, which is why they are not talking" Prof Ali Riaz, distinguished professor of political science at Illinois State University, told a webinar organised by the Committee for the Protection of Fundamental Rights yesterday to demand justice for cases of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and custodial torture.

According to Mayer Daak, a platform of families who had lost family members to enforced disappearances, 97 people fell victim to enforced disappearances in 2018, the highest in a year in the last decade. Of

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Little Hridy speaks as tears roll down her cheeks. She was speaking at a programme organised by Ma er Daak in front of the National Museum to mark the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances yesterday. Her father Parvez Hossain has been missing since December, 2013.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Legal remedy never found

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

A legal remedy is yet to come forth from either the court or law enforcement about incidents of enforced disappearance due to a lack of persistent protests and legal fights.

Take the case of former BNP lawmaker M Ilias Ali, who along with his driver, went missing from the capital's Banani on the night of April 17, 2012.

His wife Tahmina Rushdir Luna filed a writ petition with the High Court on April 19, 2012, claiming that law enforcers had illegally detained her husband. His fellow party leaders have alleged the same.

Tahmina sought HC orders on law enforcers to produce Ilias before the court.

Following the writ petition, the HC issued a rule upon the law enforcement agencies to explain within 10 days why they should not be directed

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Why did they need to make him disappear?

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Every night Jahanara Khatun went to sleep in the hope that her husband would come home the next morning.

But the morning came with no news, prolonging instead her agonising wait for Md Liton Mollah, who was whisked away in a motorcycle, handcuffed, allegedly by law enforcers on July 24.

"A month has gone by, but there is no trace of my husband. I even don't know what has happened to him," Jahanara told The Daily Star over the phone on August 20. "If my husband is involved in any crime, the police can arrest him and send him to jail. Why did they need to make him disappear?" she said with a cracked voice.

Finally, the family could find Liton on Tuesday, when police said he was arrested with a firearm and a case filed with Kushtia Sadar Police Station against him.

After meeting her husband at the police station on Wednesday, Jahanara said the man told her that he was kept at a police outpost in Baghapara of Jashore for about a month. After being detained, he was taken to the police outpost, handcuffed and blindfolded.

Quoting witnesses, she earlier told this newspaper that two men in police uniform stopped a three-wheeler, in which Liton was travelling, at Dak Bangla intersection in Jashore town around 5:00pm on July 24.

Detaining him, they called someone over a mobile phone. Minutes later, two plainclothes men with handcuffs reached the spot in a motorcycle and took him away.

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Khaleda seeks 6 more months out of prison

Cites inability to get treatment due to pandemic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia sought a six months' extension on the government order that released her for six months.

Shamim Iskandar, younger brother of Khaleda Zia, applied to the Ministry of Home Affairs recently seeking the extension, said the former prime minister's family members.

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HOLIDAY NOTICE

Today, August 30, is the holy Ashura and therefore The Daily Star office will remain closed in accordance with the decision of NOAB. There will be no issue of this paper tomorrow (Monday).

BRT to be linked to metro rail



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The authorities have taken an initiative to connect two major projects -- MRT-6 and BRT -- through a "link service" between Diabari and House Building areas of the capital's Uttara.

The country's first metro rail -- formally known as Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) -- is being constructed from Diabari to Motijheel. On the other hand, construction works of the Bus Rapid Transit -- a dedicated bus service line -- from Airport to Gazipur is also going on. The line will go through House Building area.

Question remained how people will catch the metro leaving from BRT in House Building area easily and comfortably and how a metro rail passenger would reach the House Building area, which is around 1.5 kilometer from Daibari.

Recently, Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project (GDSUTP), under which the BRT is being implemented, has taken an initiative to introduce a "link service" between Diabari and House Building areas.

The GDSUTP has called a meeting with the officials involved in the two projects and those of Dhaka North City Corporation on September 2 to discuss different aspects of initiative, officials said.

GDSUTP's project coordinator Neelima Akhter has sent a letter to the managing director of Dhaka Mass Transport Company Ltd (DMTCL), the

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Nothing better than beating

Says Rajshahi lawmaker, urges locals to thrash 'crooked' journalists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Lawmaker of Rajshahi-3 constituency Md Ayeen Uddin has said "nothing is more effective than beating" while describing how the "so-called" journalists involved in various crimes should be treated.

He made the remark while addressing a public meeting observing the National Mourning Day in Kesharhat municipality on August 27.

A video clip of the lawmaker's speech has gone viral on social media.

He said this while referring to some local journalists of Mohonpur upazila who, according to him, "are involved in extortion, drug trade and addiction under the guise of the noble profession".

"Law is strict, yet there is no law greater than beating. Whenever you find such so-called journalists, catch them and thrash them so hard that they do not dare to show up again," he said.

In the video, he also said that Mohonpur upazila has "more web portals than the entire country".

When contacted yesterday, the lawmaker confirmed his statement but said that the video clip did not show the complete speech.

"I wanted to say that there was no greater power than the people," he said.



Md Ayeen Uddin

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Dredging of the Karnaphuli river resumes after being suspended for a long time because of the pandemic. But the challenge is discarded plastic goods at the bottom of the river clogging the machine in about every 15 minutes. Inset, mechanics removing plastic bags from a cog yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

10th Death Anniversary

31st August, 2020 is the 10th death anniversary of Late **Alhaj Giashuddin Ahmed**. On that day of remembrance, we the family members, directors, officers and employees of Popular Jute Exchange Limited as well as other sister concerns fondly recall the memories of his industrious & benevolent life, and pray for the salvation and eternal peace for his departed soul.

Late Alhaj Giashuddin Ahmed

POPULAR JUTE EXCHANGE LIMITED
1, Tolaram Road, Narayangonj, Bangladesh.