

'Stalker' stabs schoolgirl to death in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A schoolgirl was stabbed to death allegedly by a stalker inside an abandoned house in Savar's Dakkhin Para area on Sunday night.

The victim was identified as Nila Roy (14), a 10th-grader of Aced School. She used to live with her parents in Kajimokma Para area.

The victim's family said that around 7pm on Sunday, Nila was on her way to hospital with her elder brother Alok to have her breathing problem examined. On their way, they were intercepted by one Mizanur Rahman (20), who threatened Alok and asked him to leave because he wanted to talk to Nila alone.

The family said Mizan then forcefully took Nila to an abandoned house owned by his father, where he stabbed her indiscriminately and left her there. Locals nearby heard Nila's cries and rescued her. She was rushed to Savar Enam Medical College Hospital with critical injuries, minutes before doctors declared her dead, they added.

Alok said Mizan forcibly took her sister away after threatening to kill him if he did not leave.

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Numerous trucks parked illegally on roads adjoining some of Sylhet city's most iconic landmarks on the banks of river Surma. And it's not only unruly truck drivers. Sylhet City Corporation, the authority responsible for enforcing parking rules, also parks its vehicles. This has been going on for years, and people who want to see their glorious past be protected are very much concerned about the riverbank's future.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Surma riverbank now a glorified parking spot

Illegal parking blocks way to Sylhet's most iconic spot; SCC itself a violator

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

Chandni Ghat, Clocktower of Ali Amjad, Kean Bridge, Sarada Hall and Circuit House -- all stand side by side on Surma riverbank, and together symbolise present-day Sylhet city.

This glorious location was renovated several times, but it was never free from illegal parking of trucks and other vehicles, which blocks pathways for tourists and locals all the time.

Despite taking steps against illegal parking, Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) itself joins in by parking their own vehicles -- occupying roads, footpaths and ultimately, the beautified riverbank.

Because of the iconic landmarks, the location always draws attention of tourists visiting Sylhet and is also a leisure destination for locals. In the last two decades, several projects were taken to beautify the whole area, and SCC is responsible for keeping such locations free from illegal occupancy.

Faruk Mahmud Chowdhury -- president of Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan), Sylhet chapter -- said, "The city corporation's services are expanding, and so are their vehicles. But ironically, they don't have any defined parking place. If they themselves park illegally, how can they force others not to do so?"

Contacted, Bidhayak Roy Chowdhury, chief executive officer of SCC, said, "The corporation constructed a terminal for truckers to park, but they always choose to do so by the roadside or on footpaths illegally."

"We have urged the owners and truck labour organisation leaders to stop this practice, but it will take time to change their mindset," he said.

When asked about SCC's own vehicles being parked there, he replied, "The city is small and there is no dedicated spot for SCC to park the

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Barishal City Corporation ranks last in LGRD review

Higher-ups blame officials' lack of expertise; residents want their voices heard

SUSHANTA GHOSH

In a blow to citizen morale, Barishal City Corporation has placed lowest in the evaluation of annual performance contracts under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives (LGRD).

The information was published in an office order signed by AKM Mizanur Rahman, deputy secretary of Local Government Department (LGD) of the LGRD ministry on September 14.

Marked out of 100, BCC scored 29.40 in the annual performance agreement report and evaluation.

In the evaluation, held among 20 departments under LGD across the country, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) stood first with a score of 98.40. Meanwhile, Sylhet City Corporation became second among all

organisations with 96.46 -- it is the first among the city corporations.

The report was based on a performance agreement signed by the 20 departments and city corporations under LGD for the fiscal year 2019-20. The evaluation took into consideration project completion rates of the agencies.

BCC higher-ups have attributed the results to the under-performance of its engineering department and those engaged in preparing project profiles. They said lack of expertise and weakness of these officials lead to the bad evaluations.

The city corporation has already given executive engineer Md Anisuzzaman a show-cause notice last month, alleging his negligence in preparing a project proposal submitted to the LGRD ministry recently, confirmed BCC Chief Executive Officer Md Israil Hossain.

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BLOGGER OYASIQUR MURDER

Death penalty sought for all five accused

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday concluded arguments and sought capital punishment for all five accused in blogger Oyasiqur Rahman Babu murder case.

During hearing, advocate Md Salahuddin Howlader, assistant public prosecutor, told the court that they have been able to prove the charges brought against all the accused in the case.

On completion of the prosecution's arguments, the defence for two accused -- Zikrullah alias Hasan and Ariful Islam alias Mushfiq -- started placing arguments.

As they could not complete arguments, Judge Md Rabul Alam of Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka set September 24 for next hearing in the case.

Twenty-four prosecution witnesses out of 40 gave their depositions before the court so far in the case.

Oyasiqur (27) was attacked by three cleaver-wielding youths in the capital's Tejgaon industrial area on March 30, 2015.

On September 1 of 2015, Mashiur Rahman, an inspector of Detective Branch of police, submitted the charge sheet against five people to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's

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Although attendance is yet to reach pre-Covid levels, those who can come to practice are putting in the hours. The photo was taken from a session of Ankur Cricketers in Dhanmondi's Abahani field.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Youngsters return to nets

Cricket academies reopening after months

FAISAL BIN IQBAL, SHOUT

After months of inactivity, cricket academies in Dhaka have started to reopen. Players and coaches are returning to the practice nets, and getting back into their previous schedules.

Though there has been a drop in players' attendance, academies are trying their best to continue practise sessions regularly, all the while ensuring proper safety measures for all involved.

"Within a month of the lockdown, we tried to bring our players under a specific routine through an online programme. We provided them with tips and lessons on how to stay fit and keep working on their skills from home," said Md Zihad Hossain, a coach at Ankur Cricket Academy.

"The routine was kept simple enough for players to carry it out on their rooftops or garages. It was important for them to stay in touch with these lessons, so that they wouldn't face any difficulty when they came back to the nets."

"Safety is always our first priority, especially now," added Hossain. "We've taken all the necessary steps to ensure safety of the players during their three-hour long practice sessions here at the academy. We're also making sure they have their parents' consent before rejoining the academy."

Before reopening, the academies took cue from institutions around the world, to observe their policies.

"When international cricket made a comeback in July, we closely observed

the going-ons and the new rules and guidelines that have been set," stated Md Abdul Mazid, coach and general secretary at Clemon Indira Road Cricket Academy.

"Taking necessary measures and safety precautions accordingly, we resumed operations on September 10, after being closed for over five months."

"Not everyone has returned to practice," adds Mazid. "So far, we've only seen the older kids join the practice, while the younger ones are still at home. Those who are showing up for practice are doing so for longer hours than before, probably because there isn't much educational pressure now."

Rezwan Khan Abir, a student of Bir Shreshtha Noor Mohammad Rifles Public School & College, has been practicing at Ankur Cricket Academy for eight years now. When the restrictions were imposed in March, he was saddened over the sudden halt in sporting activities.

"We were all heartbroken," recalled Abir. "We didn't know when we could return to practice again. At home, we were instructed to stay fit by following lesson plans set by our instructors."

After months of staying away from the game, Abir and many other academy players have begun playing again, and it seems they have a lot of catching up to do. "We have an upcoming tournament we're really looking forward to," added Abir.

"And although nothing is certain at this point, we can only pray and hope that cricket in this country gets back to normal," he said.

Court orders to freeze 2 accounts of Shahed's wife

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to freeze two bank accounts of Sadia Arabi, wife of Regent Group Chairman Mohammad Shahed, in connection with a money laundering case.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after Sheikh Md Fanafilya, a director of Anti-Corruption Commission who is leading the investigation, submitted an application.

Fanafilya said Shahed's wife had earlier opened two double benefit schemes at Premier Bank's Banani branch in the capital in which the amount stands at Tk 60,13,665.

If the accounts are not frozen, the accused can transfer the money from those accounts, Fanafilya added.

On September 2, the same Dhaka court ordered the authorities concerned to freeze 58 bank accounts of Regent Group chairman Shahed and its Managing Director Masud Parvez in connection with a money laundering case.

Ease travel curbs on Khaleda Zia: BNP

UNB, Dhaka

BNP's senior leader Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday demanded relaxation of Khaleda Zia's travel restrictions for treatment on humanitarian and moral grounds.

"Khaleda's advanced treatment is not only a humanitarian issue, but a moral one too; it is also the people's demand. As she [Khaleda] received treatment aboard in the past, she may need to go there again. An application had been put forward in this regard, but it has not been accepted," he said.

The BNP leader said, "On behalf of our party, I would like to say this ban should be relaxed, so she can go abroad for better treatment, if she is in dire need of it."

Nazrul, a BNP standing committee member, made the demand while talking to reporters, after placing wreaths at the grave of party founder Ziaur Rahman, with leaders of Swachhasebak Dal's newly-announced partial committee.

On September 15, Khaleda Zia's conditional release from jail in two corruption cases was extended by six months, on condition that she cannot go abroad.

Reacting to Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud's remark which stated sending Khaleda back to jail can be demanded due to BNP's exaggeration, Nazrul said no one has the right to push their party chief and a three-time former PM towards death by depriving her of proper treatment.

Nazrul said Hasan Mahmud has become a "criticism affairs minister", since he talks more against Khaleda and her family than about his ministry and departments.

TRAFFICKING WOMEN TO DUBAI Choreographer Evan remanded for 7 days

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday placed choreographer Evan Shahril Sohag on a seven-day remand in a case filed on charge of trafficking women to Dubai.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Begum Yasmin Ara passed the order after Md Kamruzzaman, a sub-inspector of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and also the case's investigation officer, produced him before the court with a seven-day remand prayer.

In the remand prayer, the IO said Evan was directly involved with trafficking women to a "dance bar" in Dubai.

Moreover, three other accused made confessional statements before magistrates where they said that Evan was involved in trafficking women to Dubai. So, he needs to be remanded to find out vital clues about the incident and to know whereabouts of other responsible persons, the IO added.

The defence submitted a petition seeking bail along with cancellation of the remand prayer, saying that their client was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass him.

Youth confesses to killing 2 teen cousins in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A youth on Sunday confessed to killing two teen cousins in Rangpur, said police.

Mahfuzur Rahman Rifat (22) gave his statement before the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Delwar Hossain in the afternoon.

He was sent to Rangpur jail afterwards, said police, adding that they arrested Rifat on Saturday.

Abu Maruf Hossain, deputy police commissioner (crime) of Rangpur Metropolitan Police, informed this at a briefing in his office around 8pm on Sunday.

The two teenagers -- Somaiya Akter Meem (16) and Zannatun Mawa (14) -- daughters of Moksedul Islam and Mominul Islam respectively -- were found dead at their home in Rangpur city's Goneshpur area on Friday.

According to police, Mawa was staying over at Meem's house as her father went to Kurigram.

Meantime, Rifat who had a relation with Meem wanted to see her. Meem told him to come over as no one was home at the time.

After Rifat arrived, he and Meem spent some time together and soon afterwards locked into an altercation.

At one point of the argument, Rifat strangled Meem to death using a pillow. He then hanged her body from a ceiling fan to make it look like a suicide, said police.

As Mawa witnessed the incident, Rifat stabbed and killed her with a piece of broken glass.

Later, he fled the house.

Locals found the bodies at home in the afternoon and informed police, which police sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy the same day.

Mawa's father filed a murder case with Kotwali Police Station on Saturday.



Even with an overpass visible in the frame, a pedestrian chooses to cross the Mirpur Road near Mohammadpur's Khilji Road by maneuvering through a host of vehicles, many of which are buses. This photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Lighter vessel capsizes at Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A cement clinker laden lighter vessel capsized at the Bay of Bengal near Bhasanchar area yesterday morning.

All the 13 crewmen were rescued by staff of an oil tanker and a lighter vessel crossing the area during the incident.

A vessel of Abul Khair Group -- Titu-19 -- was on its way to Moktarpur in Munshiganj after loading around 1,250 tonnes of cement clinker imported from a mother vessel at the outer anchorage of Chattogram port.

The vessel capsized partially at the Bay around 3 nautical miles off from Bhasanchar around 11:30am after a crack developed at its bottom due to strong current in the sea, said Mohammad Salim, deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

Currently there is cautionary signal-3 and the sea is too rough, Salim said, adding that they earlier asked all the lighter vessels not to ply when signal-3 is hoisted. But some operators did not pay heed, he said.

Nabi Alam, general secretary of Lighter Vessel Workers Association, said eight crewmen of the sinking vessel were rescued by the staff of an oil tanker named Arju while five others were rescued by another lighter vessel named Begum Rokeya.