

Tokon Thaakoor secures bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Filmmaker Tokon Thaakoor, who was arrested on Sunday in a case filed by Ministry of Information over misappropriating government funds, was granted bail yesterday by a Dhaka court.

Thaakoor was taken to Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Sufian's court yesterday morning, where he received bail after lawyers of the state and his side presented their arguments.

The case, filed in 2016, accuses Thakoor of misappropriating money from the national film grant-awarded film "Kaata", which he is directing.

Although Thakoor allegedly took out Tk 13 lakh out of the allotted Tk 35 lakh, he did not work on the film.

The arrest warrant was made on October 3, and Thaakoor was arrested from his residence at the capital's Katabon at 8:30pm.

In a previous interview with The Daily Star,

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With the 22-day fishing ban at sea currently in place, trawlers remain docked and fishers have nothing much to do aside from informal work to pass the days. This photo was taken yesterday from Mariner's Drive Road in Chattogram city.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

ATTACK ON NAVY OFFICIAL
Won't spare wrongdoers
Says home minister

AGENCIES

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said those who are involved in crime will be brought to book irrespective of their identities.

"If anyone commits a crime, he/she will be brought under the law, no matter who the person is," Asaduzzaman told reporters at his Dhanmondi residence when they sought comment about the attack on a navy official, reports UNB.

The home minister said police officials concerned were given order to investigate into the incident quickly and neutrally.

"It is unexpected... a person cannot be attacked or given threat," he said. "A crime is always a crime... a naval officer was attacked and we are dealing with the matter..." said the minister while responding to a question, reports BSS.

A case has been filed against Irfan Selim, son of MP Haji Selim, for "attacking" Lieutenant Wasif Ahmed Khan of Bangladesh Navy at Dhanmondi in the capital on Sunday night.

Lt Wasif filed the case with Dhanmondi Police Station against four named accused, including Irfan Selim, also councillor of ward-30 of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), and several unnamed accused.

The three other accused are AB Siddique Dipu (45), Md Zahid, (35), and driver Md Mizanur Rahman, (30).

According to the case statement, a private car hit Lt Wasif's motorcycle near Labaid Hospital around 7:45pm when he and his wife were returning to their Mohammadpur residence from Nilkhet.

Later, some people came out of the car and assaulted the

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WEBINAR ON SAVING AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Cooperative-based production, marketing a must: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only strong farmer organisations and cooperative methods of agricultural production and marketing can save the country's agriculture sector whereas 82 percent of the farmers have become landless, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

In association with The Daily Star, the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) organised the online roundtable on "Food Sovereignty, Inclusive Food System and Access to Land Organisers", marking World Food Day 2020.

Prof MM Akash of Dhaka University told the event that farmers are being pushed out from this sector; after being landless, they are migrating to other informal sectors. "Second generation of farmers in Bangladesh don't want to be a farmer, but they have the ownership of agricultural land which should be taken from them and distributed among those who want to do

farming," said Prof Akash.

"We should ensure labour rights for the farmworkers and abolish discrimination between men and women. We have to ensure fair prices for the agricultural products and availability of agricultural ingredients," said the economist.

He proposed a cooperative-based agricultural structure.

In the keynote speech, Rowshan Jahan Moni, deputy executive director of ALRD also mentioned about cooperative ownership of production and marketing.

She said poor and disadvantaged sectors -- including small farmers, rural artisans, indigenous people, fisherfolks, poor urban dwellers and women -- have been hit hardest by the Covid-19 pandemic and remain the most vulnerable and food system is a major concern. She said there should be an agrarian reform of land to restore land rights to the farmers.

"Khas land and agricultural government

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24 dengue patients in hospitals

UNB, Dhaka

A total of twenty-four dengue patients are currently taking treatment at different hospitals across the country.

Three new dengue cases were reported in the past 24 hours, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) said in a media release.

Some 576 people have been diagnosed with dengue since the beginning of this year. Among them, 548 have recovered, the DGHS added.

Bangladesh witnessed a massive dengue outbreak last year when 101,354 people were hospitalised and 101,037 recovered fully.

Dengue killed 179 people last year, according to official figures.

Sea tourism can help country beat Covid blues: experts

UNB, Dhaka

For a country that has the world's largest mangrove forest the Sundarbans, the port of Chattogram, world's longest natural sea beach Cox's Bazar, the Teknaf peninsula and Saint Martin's Island, "sea tourism" can help beat Covid-19 blues by generating billions of dollars. All that's needed is an integrated initiative to connect these popular destinations by marine terminals, say experts.

"Bangladesh has a huge potential in the sea tourism sector. We need an integrated initiative that will help the country generate robust economic growth," Dr Md Kawser Ahmed, professor of the oceanography department at Dhaka University, told the news agency. "We can earn billions of dollars through sea tourism if the Sundarbans, Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Teknaf and Saint Martin's Island could be connected."

While sea tourism has the potential to help Bangladesh get the "developed country" status by 2041, at the same time, the government should take appropriate steps like fixing environmental taxes for tourists not only to generate revenue but also to protect the country's valuable resources, according to Dr Kawser.

"We propose the government to fix Tk 500 for a tourist landing on Saint Martin's Island and a minimum of Tk 1,000 every night as environment tax. We hope tourists will pay this willingly," he said, also stressing the need for introducing scuba diving at Saint Martin's island to attract tourists.

Bangladesh, the professor said, can be a prime destination for foreign tourists in South Asia. "Bangladesh can take an initiative in the future to connect Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar and India by marine routes. So, government-to-

government agreements are needed for making this a success," he said.

But another expert, Research Director of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Dr Khandoker Golam Moazzem said tourism is needed in this country, but not at the cost of the environment. "We have to give priority to the environment at first. We can't destroy our resources in the name of tourism. So, we have to conserve the corals too."

Dr Khandoker said the government has to embark on a long-term plan to run passenger vessels in the seas prioritising the nature first policy. "Then, domestic and regional tourists will visit the spots. And the tourism sector will play a significant role in Bangladesh's economy," the economist said.

Shiblul Azam Koreshi, owner of Abakash Parjatan on Saint Martin,

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Historic hillock razed or not?

Environmentalists, DoE say it was; MC College, EED deny claim

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

On October 10, a group of socially concerned citizens went to protest the gang-rape that occurred at Sylhet's MC College. After protesting, some of the participants entered the college campus and found that part of a historic hillock was reportedly being razed.

As they also protested this incident, the operation was halted and after a couple of weeks, and the college authority managed to reshape the hillock and claimed that it was not razed to begin with.

The hillock, commonly known as "Thackeray Tila", is named after William Makepeace Thackeray, who came to Sylhet as its Collector under East India Company in 1772.

During his tenure, he lived in a bungalow built on top of the hillock. Now, the residential bungalow of the

college's principal is situated there.

The part of the hillock centring the incident is adjacent to the college's old canteen, where a 10-storey building is being constructed, with a budget of Tk 13 crore.

Abdul Karim Kim -- general secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), Sylhet chapter -- said, "On that day, we visited the college and found the contractor's men razing part of the hillock with an excavator."

"Although we saw them doing so, the authority claimed that they were removing unearthed soil stored at the bottom of the hillock. But we strongly protested the act," he said.

On Saturday, this correspondent visited the college and found that the hillock's slope was reshaped to the original state, but the soil was loose.

Md Uzzal Bakh, sub-assistant

engineer of Education Engineering Department (EED) in Sylhet, said, "The soil, which was unearthed while piling the building, was stored at the bottom of the hillock, and the contractor was just removing that soil, not razing the hillock."

MC College Principal Prof Saleh Ahmed also said the same. "I understand the importance of Thackeray Tila, as I live on top of it. The part razed is just the stockpile of soil previously unearthed, not part of the historic hillock."

"I vow to protect all hillocks, natural beauty and the college's heritage. In no way will I let the contractor destroy this," he said.

While the college authority and EED denied the allegation, Department of Environment (DoE) says otherwise.

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Scrap digital security act

Zafrullah urges PM

UNB, Dhaka

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury yesterday urged the government to abolish the Digital Security Act for strengthening democracy and removing the obstacle to investigative journalism.

Speaking at a human chain, he also called upon the government to withdraw all the cases filed against journalists under the act and ensure freedom of the press.

"Give journalists the scope for divulging facts. All the cases filed against them have to be withdrawn. Not only that, I also call upon the prime minister to annul the Digital Security Act and send it to the grave. It'll benefit you, the country and people. It'll also help strengthen democracy," Zafrullah said.

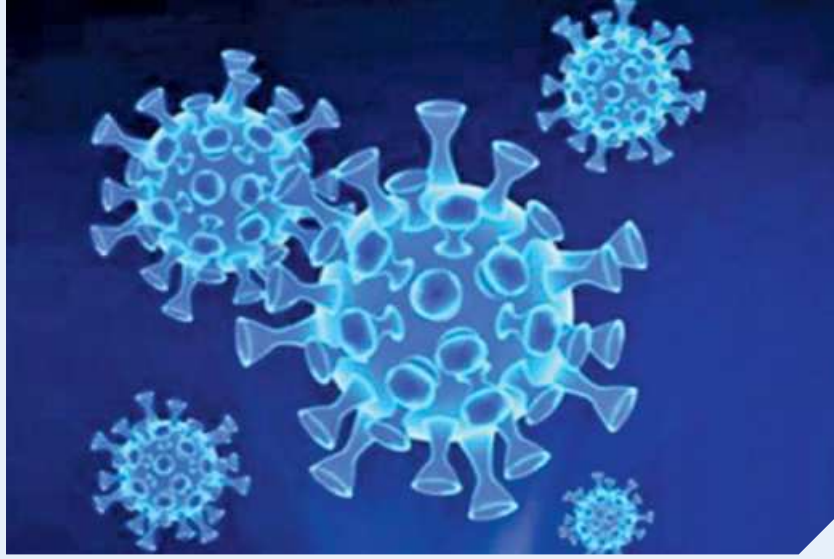
Bangladesh Mofussil Journalists' Association arranged the programme in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding release of Ruhul Amin Gazi, president of a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ).

Stating that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Sunday urged journalists to write reports based on facts shunning yellow journalism, he said unethical or yellow journalism flourishes when freedom of the press is obstructed.

"When such an act (digital security) is used against journalists to prevent them from investigating facts, then yellow journalism and militancy emerge in the country," he observed.

Zafrullah alleged that the government's wrong policy, unfair behaviour and

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THREE COVID-19 MYTHBUSTERS

THE LIKELIHOOD OF SHOES SPREADING COVID-19 IS VERY LOW

The likelihood of COVID-19 being spread on shoes and infecting individuals is very low. As a precautionary measure, particularly in homes where infants and small children crawl or play on floors, consider leaving your shoes at the entrance of your home. This will help prevent contact with dirt or any waste that could be carried on the soles of shoes.

COVID-19 IS CAUSED BY A VIRUS, NOT BY BACTERIA – ANTIBIOTIC HAS NO ROLE AGAINST IT

The virus that causes COVID-19 is in a family of viruses called Coronaviridae. Antibiotics do not work against viruses.

Some people who become ill with COVID-19 can also develop a bacterial infection as a complication. In this case, antibiotics may be recommended by a health care provider.

There is currently no licensed medication to cure COVID-19. If you



have symptoms, call your health care provider or COVID-19 hotline for assistance.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO DRUGS LICENSED FOR THE TREATMENT OR PREVENTION OF COVID-19

While several drug trials are ongoing, there is currently no proof that Hydroxychloroquine or any other drug can cure or prevent COVID-19. The misuse of Hydroxychloroquine can cause serious side effects and illness and even lead to death. WHO is coordinating efforts to develop and evaluate medicines to treat COVID-19.

Source: World Health Organisation



Environmentalists photographed this excavator reportedly razing a part of "Thackeray Tila" of MC College campus on October 11. Days later, on October 25, the same area was seen reshaped to its original state, as if nothing happened. But the soil was still loose.

PHOTO: COLLECTED