

# AL leader Manzurul Imam murder case uncertain

## Complainants, witnesses afraid of giving deposition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

The second death anniversary of advocate Manzurul Imam, a prominent Awami League leader in Khulna, was observed in here on Thursday.

He was killed allegedly by outlaws on August 25 in 2003.

Fate of the sensational murder case is now uncertain due to alleged non cooperation of complainants Abdullah AL Mamun, Abdullah AL Rumi and Meherunnesa, who are sons and wife of the slain AL leader, court sources said.

When contacted, complainant and prosecution witnesses told this correspondent that they are feeling insecure to appear before the court for deposition.

To mark his death anniversary, Khulna district and city Awami League brought out a mourning procession in the city, followed by placing wreaths at his portrait at the spot where he was killed. AL

leaders also offered fateha at his grave, held a condolence meeting and a Milad Mehfil at his residence and distributed food among the poor in every ward in the city.

Advocate Manjurul Imam was killed in a bomb attack on the morning of August 25 in 2003 near his residence at Shamsur Rahman Road in city.

His aide Advocate Bijon Bihari Mondol and rickshaw driver Ali Akbar were also killed in the incident.

Abdullah AL Mamun, eldest son of the slain AL leader, filed an FIR with Khulna thana. The case was first investigated by SI Abu Zahid Shaikh of Khulna thana. Later, Inspector Shajahan Ali of Detective Branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) was made the IO. He submitted charge sheet to court on March 4 last year, naming four extremists as accused. They are Shukur Ali, Shaikh Abdul Baki alias Ripon, Ganesh Banerjee and Imam

Sarder.

Accused Imam Sardar was killed in crossfire in June last year. Ganesh Banerjee is absconding. Accused Ripon is on bail, while Shukur Ali is in jail.

Trial of the case began on November 1 last year in the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge where charge against the accused was framed.

Wednesday was the 9th working day for the trial. But the date has been shifted to October 10 as the complainant and three prosecution witnesses did not turn up for deposition.

The court issued warrants of arrest against the prosecution witnesses for failing to appear for deposition in the last nine months.

According to OC Iqbal Hossain of Sadar thana, the three witnesses could not be produced before court on Wednesday as they were not found in their house.

### Free local govts from influence of ministers, MPs

#### Workshop told at Sathkira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sathkira*

Interference by ministers and parliament members undermine the status and authority of Union Parishad, creating obstacles to good governance at grassroots level.

This was stated by civil society members while addressing a training program that concluded at Sathkira town yesterday.

The two-day training programme on "Local Government and Responsible Governance", held at Sathkira Public Library auditorium, was organised by a local NGO, Uttaran, in cooperation with Local Government Initiative (LGI), Assistance for Rural Department (ARD) and USAID.

With Principal Sheikh Abdul Wadood in the chair, the concluding function was addressed by, among others, Sathkira Bar Association General Secretary Shah Alam, Principal Asit Kumar Majumdar, Sheikh Mahidul Islam, Former Union Parishad chairman Abdul Hamid and journalists Prof. Abu Ahmed, Mizanur Rahman, Abdul Wahab and Yarab Hossain.

### 'Lift ban on documentary Karnaphulir Kanna'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

Leaders of five organisations in Rangamati have demanded withdrawal of ban on the 'Karnaphulir Kanna', a documentary made by Tanvir Mokammel on the socio-economic situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

In a joint statement, leaders of the five organisations claimed that there is nothing 'objectionable' or 'against national interest' in the documentary.

The statement was signed by Sukumar Dewan, secretary of Upajatiya Samajik Forum; Jhimit Jhimit Chakma, president of Jhum Aesthetic Council; Kalayan Chakma, vice-president of Girishur Shilpi Gusthi; Sajeob Chakma, secretary of Jhum Lekhok Forum and Chanchu Chakma, Radang Shilpi Gusthi.



The Rangamati unit of Stop Violence Against Women (SVAW), an NGO, brought out a procession in the hill town on Wednesday marking the National Day to Resist Violence Against Women, 2005.

# Chhabi now faces death threat

## Ordeals of tortured Bagerhat woman AL leader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Chhabi Rani Mondol, a prominent leader of Rampal upazila Awami League in Bagerhat district, is allegedly being threatened with death by some BNP activists for 'refusing to withdraw' the case she filed with the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal in Khulna.

Chhabi Rani Mondol, 34, was abducted allegedly by some BNP activists on the night of August 21 in 2002 while she was returning home at Orhabunia village in the same upazila. The BNP men took her to their party office where she was reportedly beaten and sexually harassed. Police rescued her in a critical condition and took her to Khulna Medical College Hospital on the same night.

Kalidashi Mondol, mother of Chhabi Rani, lodged an FIR with Rampal thana on August 23, 2002, naming 15 BNP leaders and activists for "torturing and sexually harassing" her daughter.

Twelve out of the 15 FIR-named

accused are now on bail. Chhabi Rani Mondol, told this correspondent at Khulna Press Club on Thursday that trial of her case is scheduled to begin in October this year.

"The accused who are now on bail are threatening to kill me for my refusal to withdraw the case", she said.

"Neither police nor any leader of Begarhat Awami League has so far come forward to save me from the BNP hoodlums". "The DIG of Khulna Range and the Police Superintendent of Bagerhat are yet

to respond to my appeal for security of ma life", she said.

Chhabi Rani Mondol was under treatment in Khulna Medical College Hospital for 44 days after she was admitted there on the night of August 21, 2002.

The Leader of the Opposition in Jatiaya Sangsad and Awami League chief Shaikh Hasina visited ailing Chhabi Rani at the hospital on August 29.

Local and central leaders of other opposition also visited her at the hospital.

Bagerhat district BNP President MAH Selim MP assured her of all possible help and to take action against the BNP men who allegedly tortured her.

"But now, none wants to give any patient hearing to my sorrows and sufferings. Bagerhat Awami League leaders want me to be a victim of attack by BNP goons again to make a political issue", she alleged.



Lawyers in Barisal formed a human chain in front of the court building on Thursday to press their 18-point demand.

# Road accidents kill more than 4000 a year

## BUET-sponsored workshop told in Rangpur

RAFIQ SARKER, *Rangpur*

Speakers at a workshop here stressed on coordinated efforts by all stakeholders including government departments and transport businessmen to check road accidents in the country.

Despite wholehearted efforts by the National Road Safety Council, road accidents are increasing, killing and injuring a large number of people everyday, they said.

Lack of traffic knowledge, disrespect to traffic rules and corruption by government departments concerned are the main causes behind increasing accidents, the speaker said.

The day-long workshop and training on 'Road Safety and Good Driving Practices' was organised by Accident Research Centre of BUET. It was held at Rangpur Parjaton Motel.

The speakers made a number

of proposals to reduce the rate of road accidents.

With Eng. Mojibur Rahman, president of IEEB in the chair, it was addressed by, among others, Rangpur Deputy Commissioner Nazrul Islam Khan, Police Superintendent Mahbun Mohshin, Assistant Professor of BUET Mohammad Moahbub Alam and Associate Professor of Rajshahi University ANM Saleh.

As many as 150 transport workers and transport owners participated in the workshop.

Prof Mazharul Haque, Project Director of ARC, presented the keynote paper at the workshop.

Road accidents cause a loss of Tk 4000 to 5000 crore in the country every year. The amount is about two percent of the GDP, it said.

According to police records, about 4000 people are killed and 5000 injured every year in the country due to road accidents.

The actual rate would be much higher than the police record as the law-enforcing agencies fail to record all the accidents, Haque said.

The number would be 10,000 to 12,000, he claimed.

He cited a study to say that the rate of road accident in Bangladesh is about 10 per cent higher than in developed countries.

Other speaker said that the main cause for rising road accidents is lack of strict enforcement of laws.

Most of the accidents take place due to wreckless driving by persons who can procure driving licences without proper training. But after an accident they manage a section of officials and escape punishment.

The speakers also called for creating awareness among transport worker and member of the public about road accidents.

10X2

12X3



Charge' de Affaires of the United States embassy Judith A Chammas handing over a schoolbag to a student at a simple function held at Rangamati Government High School on Wednesday.

### US embassy books for CHT students

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Rangamati*

Over 1800 schoolbags were distributed among students of class VII to IX in Rangamati and Khagrachhari on Thursday and the day before as 'gift from American people' to Bangladeshi students under a Shared Future Programme.

Charge' de Affaires of the United States embassy, Judith A Chammas, handed over the schoolbags at simple functions held at the respective schools.

In Rangamati, a function was held at Rangamati Government High School on Wednesday.

With its headmistress Nirupa Dewan in the chair, the function was also addressed, by among others, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Gazi Md Zulhash, Robert

Wang, Director of American Center and its Programme Development Advisor Sabrin Rahman.