



Motijheel in downtown was built during the Mughal period. There was a big Mahal for Mirza Mohammad housing a large pond known as Sukku Mahal's pond. The area was later named Motijheel. A mazar called Shahjalal's mazar where fairs were organised existed. Motijheel and Dilkusha gardens were in the same place earlier. The road dividing the two places was constructed during the British rule.

## VEHICULAR NUMBER PLATES

# Dress as you like!

Car owners defy the law and use number plates of different sizes, shapes, fonts and even blinding lights

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

Use of number plates of varying sizes and with decorative designs has become a common practice although any kind of alteration in the plates is strictly prohibited.

According to BRTA regulations, it is illegal to cover any part of a number plate with any materials -- solid or colourless -- that affects the plate's visibility or reflectivity. The plates should be 524mm x 112mm in size and must have the number printed in Bangla in prescribed colour. Any illustrations beside the licence number are also strictly prohibited.

Zunayed Islam (not real name) has recently bought a brand new SUV from a showroom in Dhanmondi. The car came with a number plate frame that includes a metallic border along with the logo of the showroom at the bot-

tom.

A few weeks later, Zunayed's car was stopped by a traffic sergeant and a case was filed not because the officer could not easily see the numbers on the plate, but because the plate had something over it, which is against the rules.

Car owners have definite reasons to be cautious as traffic

officials have the authority to file cases against vehicles with such personalised number plates.

"Although putting anything beside the licence number is a complete violation of rules, you can see all sorts of things in number plates including metallic ornaments along with different

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## ACID SURVIVOR

# Heartless pir's beastly acid attack on a young girl

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Salma Akhtar sat on a bed of the burn unit of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with her face down yesterday. The left side of her face was thoroughly bandaged. Acid thrown at her while she was in bed in the middle of the night scorched her facial tissues badly.

She remained mum all the while visitors asked her questions about how this terrible incident happened to her on July 10 in her village home at Sarail, Brahmanbaria.

Salma's aunt Shahera who was attending her at the hospital bedside said the young girl has stopped talking about the incident. "She is so upset that she has stopped taking food since this morning," said Shahera.



Salma at the DMCH burn unit.

STAR PHOTOGRAPH

Hailing from Sarail in Brahmanbaria, Salma and younger of two sisters in the family appeared in the SSC exams from Sarail Girls' High School this year. She was looking forward to getting admitted to a college. But this unexpected acid attack has brought everything to a halt in this young person's life.

According to Salma's own statement made earlier, Syed Jahangir Alam, a local Pir, threw acid on her face early morning of July 10 when she was asleep. The Pir was residing at their house on that night, as her mother and elder sister have been his avid followers.

"My sister (Salma's mother) has still difficulties to believe that the Pir has done this," said Shahera.

After acid was thrown Salma woke up with a sudden

burning pain on her face and rushed towards the family tube well in the courtyard and washed her face. According to doctor at the DMCH the water poured on the burnt area saved her from serious injuries.

Md Abu Taher, officer-in-charge, Sarail Police Station, said that according to Salma's statement the Pir had been giving her indecent proposals for sometime. As Salma brushed aside the Pir's proposals, the vengeful Pir resorted to throwing acid.

"The Pir is our prime suspect and we are doing our best to arrest him," said Taher.

"Since Salma's mother and sister are defending the pir, we produced them to the court on Friday. Today we will ask for further remand," said Taher.

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"We are still surviving because we have not meddled into giving directions. Had we done so, we would have been in power. But then all the guns would have been pointed at us and we would have been finished"

-- Gen Moeen U Ahmed  
Army Chief

• Said at a seminar at Hotel Radisson, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

"Those who are hatching the minus two conspiracy are the enemies of democracy and democratic politics"

-- Khaleda Zia  
BNP Chairperson

Said at a Juba Dal meeting in New York over phone over suggestions of her quitting the post of the chairperson, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"It is not their duty to get involved in politics or to break up and build political parties"

-- Sheikh Hasina  
Awami League Chief

Told reporters after visiting noted singer Sabina Yasmin at a city hospital, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"It has violated all norms of journalism. The news was published only to undermine me and the office of the speaker"

-- Speaker Jamiruddin Sirkar  
Said at a press conference at his official residence to counter a news item published in The Daily Star about his drawing Tk 28 lakh medical bill ignoring official objection, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

"I do not know whether the two leaders are kept in confinement. But I don't think it's necessary to keep them confined. They aren't threat to the country"

-- MA Matin  
Communications Adviser

Told reporters, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

"I want to devote the rest of my life to the welfare of the people of Chittagong, especially Fatikchhari, my own area"

-- Justice Faisal Mahmud Faizee  
Told UNB after resigning as a justice of High Court of Supreme Court who allegedly tampered with his LLB certificate, on Friday. Source: The Daily Star

"But thank God it's all over now"

-- Mohammad Yasin  
A passenger of Biman

Told reporters after a flight of Biman from Dubai was forced to hover in the sky for about half an hour due to wheel trouble before landing in Chittagong, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghias

## FOLLOW-UP

## Two YEARS INTO MASUM'S SO-CALLED DEATH IN CROSSFIRE

# Parents still long for the long arm of law

SHAHZNAZ PARVEEN

It has been two years since the gruesome killing of Iqbal Hossain Masum, a brilliant student of Jagannath University, took place, but mysteriously, police are yet to submit investigation report of the case despite an order of CMM's court.

With no headway in the investigation, on July 4, Masum's family in a letter to Chief Adviser appealed for justice.

Masum, a Shershah Shuri Road resident at Mohammadpur, was brutally killed on July 8, 2005. On the dreadful day, Masum was attending a family programme in Mechedi community centre at Asadgate in the capital. Masum went out of the community centre after an anonymous caller called him on his cellphone.

He went missing ever since and his worried family members could not trace him all night. Next morning, his family came to know the horrible news on a local TV channel that he had been killed.

It is alleged that a team of Detective Branch (DB) of police picked him up from the community centre. The DB personnel took his body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital next morning claiming that he had been killed in a 'crossfire'.

They tried to brand Masum a notorious criminal named Galakata Masum who was



Masum

accused in several criminal cases. The DB however could not present any substantial evidence or record whatsoever to back up their allegation.

Masum's father Khandaker Abul Khaer termed the killing a planned execution. He said there was not even a single general dairy (GD) registered against his son in any police station in the country.

He argued that Masum could not have been killed during crossfire since the bullet wounds in his head, armpit and lower back (where kidneys are located) bear clear signs of shooting at point-blank range.

When Khaer challenged DB's allegations and intended to file a case against the DB with Mohammadpur Police Station, the on-duty police officials refused to accept any case and recorded a GD instead.

On August 18, 2005, Khaer filed a petition with the CMM's court, Dhaka.

The court directed ASM Mizanur Rahman, the then Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner, to conduct an inquiry into the matter. The DMP commissioner then assigned Shahriar Rahman, the then assistant deputy commissioner (south) of DMP, to conduct the inquiry. Rahman cross-examined 21 people and submitted a 10-page report on June 2006. Rahman was later transferred to another post.

Masum's father suspects wrongdoing and says it is mysterious that the report did not make it to the court after two years into the killing. Without the report, trials could not take place.

Masum's family said Masum's killers are still at large and justice is being delayed as the investigation report is yet to be submitted to the court.

# Grabbing main flood outlet in Rupnagar for housing

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Land grabbers are filling up the main drainage canal of Mirpur section 2 and Rupnagar residential area and selling those illegally filled up plots with forged documents.

National Housing Authority (NHA) officials cautioned that a huge part of Mirpur area could face heavy waterlogging due to the filling up of the canal between Mirpur section 2 and Rupnagar Tin-shed area, which drains out storm water of the densely populated area.

The Mirpur zone office of the housing authority has complained at Pallabi Police Station for preventing the illegal filling and recommended conducting eviction drives against those illegal encroachments to keep the sewerage line free.

Police recently visited the area and warned the caretakers and workers engaged in the illegal earth-filling work. Locals said the land grabbers continue their illegal activities at night after the police cautioned them on road number 23, 27 and 28. They construct structures on the filled up spaces and rented them for various purposes.

Unsafe

and illegally connected gas, power and water lines were found in the grabbed plots. Locals said a section of dishonest employees from the utility service agencies regularly

collect money for the illegal connections from the owners. Religious institutions like madrasa or orphanages have also been established there to protect those from eviction. One Abdul

Kader established Baitul Noor Madrasa and orphanage on the canal. The orphans often have to work for filling up the canal.

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The main canal that drains all storm water from a vast area in Rupnagar has been grabbed by individuals.

STAR PHOTO