

AUG 21 ATTACK CASE Ex-magistrate gives statement before court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A former Dhaka metropolitan magistrate yesterday gave his statement before a Dhaka court in August 21 grenade attack cases.

AKM Emdadul Haque, the former metropolitan magistrate of Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court, appeared before a speedy trial tribunal and described what he knew about the cases.

Emdadul had recorded confessional and judicial statements of two accused and three prosecution witnesses during his service.

The accused are Pakistan based Lasker-e-Taiba leader Abdul Majed Butt alias Yusuf Butt and Kashmir based Hizbul Mujahideen leader Abdul Malek while the witnesses are Nahid Laila Kakon, wife of Majid Butt, Lt Col (sacked) Afzal Nasir Bhuiyan, and Lt Commander (ret'd) Mohammad Mizanur Rahman.

In his deposition, Emdadul said he recorded statements of the two accused and the three witnesses on different dates.

After recording his statement, lawyer for six of the accused including Majed, cross-examined the witness.

Judge Shahed Nuruddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 recorded statement of the witness and fixed today for next hearing of the cases.

Of the 52 accused in the two August 21 grenade attack cases, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed and 24 others, now in custody, were produced before the court yesterday.

Karnaphuli Water Supply Project starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The long waited Karnaphuli Water Supply Project in Pomra union under Rangunia upazila of Chittagong was inaugurated yesterday.

Minister for Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Syed Ashrafur Islam formally inaugurated the Tk 1,510 crore project aimed at fulfilling the demand of pure drinking water of Chittagong city dwellers to a great extent.

Chittagong Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) is implementing the project. Wasa Chittagong also organised yesterday's inaugural ceremony.

At the programme, Syed Ashrafur Islam said it is the first project regarding drinking water to be implemented in the last 27 years in Chittagong and thus, is a landmark in providing water to city dwellers.

Minister for Environment and Forest Dr Hasan Mahmud said water supply and sewerage system of Chittagong is not

sufficient in serving a city with six million people.

Once the project is completed, around 26 percent of the city's total demand of drinking water will be met.

Wasa Chittagong undertook the project with major funding being provided by JICA. Under this project, water will be collected from the river Karnaphuli and will be purified in Pomra to supply to the city 35km away.

CHAOS AT THE PROGRAMME

Chaos marred the beginning of the programme as activists and leaders of local Awami League and its associate organisations were scuffling over getting on the stage.

Some AL activists and locals were vexed at Wasa Chittagong for not including the name of Hasan Mahmud in the project's brochure as the environment and forest minister, according to them, played a large role in the project's success especially in land acquisition.



PHOTO: STAR

Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Syed Ashrafur Islam, fourth from right, goes round Karnaphuli Water Supply Project in Pomra union of Chittagong's Rangunia upazila yesterday after inaugurating it.

MOUDUD'S REMARKS ABOUT PM Tantamount to contempt of court

Claims law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader Moudud Ahmed's comment regarding disposals of cases against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is tantamount to contempt of court, said State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam yesterday.

On October 13, Moudud told a programme in the capital that there were 14 corruption cases against Hasina, which she had managed to withdraw after assuming power in 2008, and if the trials of the cases were held, she might have got 108 years of imprisonment.

In this regard, Qamrul told journalists at his office yesterday that Moudud had committed falsehood by making the baseless and fabricated statement.

Urging Moudud to withdraw his comment, Qamrul said the cases against Hasina were quashed by the High Court following legal procedures, as those were not acceptable for trials.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Moudud and many others earlier took similar facilities in respect of cases against them, he added.

TV, online media should publish rejoinders

Says DU VC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique yesterday underscored the need for formulation of a policy to ensure publication of rejoinders in the country's online media and television channels.

Like the print media, the online media and television channels do not publish the rejoinders as they are yet to follow any policy regarding the matter, he said.

Prof Arefin was addressing a roundtable discussion styled "Managing Online Media (Draft) Policy 2012: Contemporary Thoughts" organised by DU Information Technology Society at the university's Centre for Advanced Research in Sciences.

He said an online policy is needed to ensure transparency and objectivity in the journalism field.

Young people should get the opportunity of expressing their constructive opinions in the social media for the wellbeing of the nation, he added.

DU Television and Film Studies Department Chairman Prof AJM Shafiul Alam Bhuiyan also spoke.

Coordinated efforts needed for curbing road accidents

Say experts, govt officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government agencies must step up their coordinated efforts to reduce rising road accident numbers which kill thousands of people and cost the economy Tk 5,000 crore every year, experts and officials said yesterday.

They said non-government organisations (NGO) should also come forward to help achieve the country's target to cut road accident fatalities by half by 2020 as per United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

They were speaking at a workshop, "Safe Roads and Traffic Safety: Planning, Design and Operational Considerations", in the National Economic Council's conference room in the capital's Planning Commission.

Official estimates say road accidents claim 3,500 to 4,000 lives a year while injuring another 5,000 people.

But as per Accident Research Institute (ARI), under the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, the fatalities were between 12,000 and 20,000 per year.

Addressing as chief guest, Planning Minister AK Khandker said the media, NGOs and citizen's groups can play an important role in raising road accident awareness and help implement robust traffic management and road safety programmes.

ARI Director Hasib Mohammed Ahsan said road accidents were increasing in developing countries like Bangladesh and going down in developed countries.

He said global road crash prevention investment was very insignificant compared to investment on other sectors and it was no different in Bangladesh, where road crashes claim two percent of the gross domestic product.

Muhammad Fazlul Bari, a member of Planning Commission's physical infrastructure division, said road accidents, claiming Tk 5,000 in economic losses annually, were rampant as 75 percent of passengers and 70 percent of freights depend on road transport.

The government plans to reduce road accident fatalities by 25 percent within 2015, he said.

Ekram Ahmed, a Public Service Commission member, said data on accidents and fatalities were not reliable as such incidents were reported only if the victims sought police help.

Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, secretary-in-charge of Planning Division; Mozammel Haque Khan, secretary of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation division of planning ministry; Abdul Mannan Howlader, a Planning Commission member; and Hasanur Rahman, division chief of Physical Infrastructure Division; also spoke on the occasion.

ATTACK ON BUDDHISTS Judicial probe commission sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a petition with the High Court seeking directives on the government to constitute a judicial commission of inquiry into the recent attacks on Buddhist communities in Ramu and Ukhia of Cox's Bazar and Patiya in Chittagong.

Advocate Eunus Ali Akond filed the petition praying that the HC directs the government to pay compensation to the victims.

He also sought a directive on the authorities concerned to record statements of both ruling and opposition political party leaders over the issue.

The petition was filed as a supplementary to a writ petition, filed by Eunus with the HC on October 3 challenging government inaction in preventing the September 29 and 30 attacks on the Buddhist temples, monasteries and households.

The HC may hear the petition today.



Inch-deep mud prevalent on this road in Imamganj Beribadh area in the capital for the past several months has been making movement over the route troublesome. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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