



Three Libyan men and a Bangladeshi woman arrested by Detective Branch of Police yesterday for allegedly running an illegal manpower export racket.

PHOTO: STAR

Shajahan, Rafiqul slammed for talk show quarrel

STAR REPORT

A number of Awami League and BNP leaders and distinguished personalities yesterday sharply criticised Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan and BNP leader Rafiqul Islam Miah for their exchange of indecent words on a live television talk show Monday night.

The way Shajahan and Rafiqul talked was nothing but a reflection of the country's "sick politics and intolerance", and it is a threat to democracy, they told The Daily Star.

For their exchange of abusive words, the authorities of private television channel Rtv had to suspend airing the live programme, "Our Democracy", where they were to talk on "Safe Journey Home for Eid and Puja".

At the programme, Shajahan started citing Al government's successes in the shipping sector and picking holes in the past BNP-led government. "No development did take place in this sector during the

rule of the four-party alliance government. There was only extortion and plundering. Mirza Abbas and Gayeshwar Chandra were involved in endless extortion."

As he went on, Rafiqul asked Shajahan, "Prove it, then talk."

The BNP leader continued, "Extortion and looting took place during our rule. Have all these stopped now? We are not involved in the Hall-Mark, Padma bridge, share market and railwaygate scams. Now, people are calling you (AL leaders) thief."

Afuming Shajahan soon broke into shouts, "Stop it. You say when I finish."

Rtv moderator Robaet Ferdous tried to calm the two when they started hurling more abusive words, and at one point he kept asking the Rtv control room to stop the programme or go to a break.

The moderator said, "Stop the programme.... I will leave. We are a new generation. We expect politicians to behave courteously."

The quarrel went on still. Shajahan called Rafiqul an uncouth man "who gets in others' way in talking."

As the situation slipped out of control, the Rtv authorities stopped airing the programme and blacked out the screen.

Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman, a BNP standing committee member, said, "We are very much disturbed for the way the two political leaders behaved. It was nothing but a reflection of a sick political culture of our country."

AL Organising Secretary Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury MP said they were yet to learn the norms of democracy and Monday's incident was a reflection.

Addressing a discussion at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, Rafiqul said that at the talk show, Shajahan "threatened to gouge his eyes out".

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said this kind of attitude by political leaders was considered a threat to democracy.

Swami Swahananda passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Swami Swahananda, a Bangladeshi-born highly revered spiritual leader in the United States, died from a stroke at Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center on October 19, Los Angeles Times reported yesterday. He was 91.

He was a spiritual leader of the Vedanta Society of Southern California and previously headed the Hindu religious organisation's branch in Berkeley.

Swahananda, son of Nirmal Chandra Goswami, was born on June 29, 1921 at a Habiganj village in Bangladesh.

He acquired a BA degree from Murari Chand College in Sylhet in 1943 and a double MA degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Calcutta in 1946.

Since 1976 he had led the Vedanta Society of Southern California, which has its headquarters at a temple in Hollywood and is affiliated with Ramakrishna Order of India.

Swahananda, a senior monk of the order, was also known for his role in founding Vedanta centres around the US, including one outside Washington DC and another in upstate New York.

As a leader of Vedanta's Southern California branch, Swahananda succeeded Swami Prabhavananda, who founded the Hollywood centre in 1930.

Three arrested with Tk 15 lakh in fake bills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine days after busting two factories making fake bank notes, Detective Branch (DB) of Police arrested three members of a gang, involved in making and spreading counterfeit money, from the capital's Paltan on Tuesday.

DB also seized Tk 15 lakh in fake notes from the possession of the arrestees -- Shahruk Hossain alias Roni, 27, Ansarul Karim, 24, and Saidul Islam, 50.

The arrestees, a section of an Old Dhaka-based gang, were assigned to carry the forged notes to a certain destination, said DB officials.

DB Additional Deputy Commissioner Mashirul Rahman said forger gangs have become active ahead of Eid-ul Azha, adopting a new technique to spread Tk 100 crore in fake bills in different markets.

The technique involves third parties which buy and sell the counterfeit notes. These groups appoint good looking and inconspicuous women and men to spend the forged notes so that no suspicions arise, he said.

"The forgers sell Tk 1 lakh in fake notes to one group for Tk 6,000 to 7,000. This group then sells it to another for Tk 10,000 to 12,000 and the sequence continues four or five times.

"In the final stage, the hired people put

the counterfeit notes into circulation by buying things from the markets," he said.

Mashirul said DB received information that three members of such a gang would meet prospective buyers in front of the General Post Office's second gate around 7:30pm.

Detectives caught the trio from there red handed. They claimed that they receive a commission for carrying the notes, he said.

The two factories in the capital's Demra and Kamrangirchar were busted on October 25 while 10 people were arrested with Bangladeshi and Indian fake notes. DB sources said there were a dozen fake note factories operating in the city.

Meanwhile, DB arrested two Yaba traders, including a Hafez (a person who has the entire holy Quran memorised), with 500 pieces of the drug from Tejgaon Industrial Area in the capital Tuesday night.

Mashirul said they arrested Hafiz Ruhul Amin, 30, and Imam Ali Khandoker alias Sumon, 25, while the duo were selling the drug to a customer at Shat Rasta intersection around 9:30pm.

"We had arrested Ruhul once before and after getting bail he got involved in the illegal business again. The gang used to bring Yaba tablets from Teknaf," he added.



A child being pushed on board a train through the window due to holiday rush at Airport Railway Station in the capital yesterday.

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One woman smears vermillion on another at a puja mandap in Dhanmondi Club Playground in the capital yesterday during celebration of Bijoya Dashami marking the end of Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Hindu community.

Six killed, four injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Six people were killed and four others injured in road accidents in Netrakona, Gaibandha, Thakurgaon and Bogra on Tuesday and yesterday.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports, two people including a schoolboy were killed in road accidents in Purbadhol and Durgapur upazilas of Netrakona on Tuesday and yesterday.

Police said Jalil Mia, 12, a class V student at Ishobpur Govt Primary School, was killed on the spot as a

truck hit him from behind on Netrakona-Mymensingh road at Ishobpur under Purbadhol upazila around 11:00pm on Tuesday.

In another road accident, Abdul Hakim, 50, was killed on the spot as a truck hit him on Netrakona-Durgapur highway at Jangail bazar under Durgapur upazila around 10:00am yesterday.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports, a man was killed and three others were injured in a road accident on Gaibandha-Sadullapur highway at Battola yesterday.

The victim Khorshed Alam, 27, was rushed to Baliadangi Upazila

Health Complex. Later, he was shifted to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital. But he died on the way to the hospital.

Our Bogra correspondent reports, two motorcyclists were killed and another was injured in a road accident in Digalkandi area under Shibgonj upazila yesterday.

Police said Faruk, 24, and Rony, 24, were killed on the spot and Rony, 22, was critically injured as a bus hit the motorcycle of the victims when they were traveling to Bogra town from Gobindaganj.