

21 eminent citizens express worry over Limon's trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of 21 eminent citizens yesterday expressed their concern for the commencement of trial of Limon Hossain, a college student in Jhalakathi who was shot and maimed by Rapid Action Battalion two years ago, in an arms case.

"We are worried about the initiation of the formal trial through indicting Limon, a student of Rajapur College in Jhalakathi, after refusal of his appeal for acquittal from the arms case," they said in a joint statement sent by Nijera Kori.

On March 23, 2011, a team of Rab shot Limon in the left leg mistaking him for a criminal. The Rab members then picked him up and filed two cases against him and six others on the same day. Limon had to have his leg amputated.

"We are aware that on April 10, 2011, Limon's mother Henoara Begum filed a case against six Rab members, including Deputy Assistant Director Lutfor Rahman, for shooting her son unlawfully," the statement said.

The signatories are Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, Mohammad Anisur Rahman, Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, Anu Muhammad, Ruby Ghaznavi, Khushi Kabir, Prof Sonia Nishat Amin, Rokeya Kabir, Rahnuma Ahmed, Prof MM Akash, Ferdousi Priyabhashini, Tahera Yasmin, Sara Zaker, Shirin Haq, Nasimun Ara Haque Minu, Prof Gitiara Nasreen, Farah Kabir, Kaberi Gayen, Sagar Lohani, and Shipra Bose.



BNP-backed mayoral candidate MA Mannan, left, of Gazipur City Corporation polls urges voters in Gazipur sadar area yesterday to cast votes in his favour. Meanwhile, another mayoral candidate being backed by the Awami League, Ajmat Ullah Khan, right, campaigns in Tongi area. The city corporation election will be held tomorrow.



PHOTO: STAR

DWIP'S DEATH IO allowed to add murder charges to case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday allowed detectives to transform an attempted murder case, regarding the attack on Buet student Arif Rayhan Dwip, into a murder case, as the victim died on Sunday, 84 days after he was hacked by an "unknown man" on the campus.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court passed the order after investigation officer (IO) Jasim Uddin Dewan, an inspector of the Detective Branch of Police, sought permission to add murder charges to the case.

Dwip, 23, a third year mechanical engineering student at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and a Bangladesh Chhatra League activist, came under the attack on April 9 at Nazrul Islam Hall where he used to reside.

He had been treated in the capital's Square Hospital till his death.

Nine days after the attack, DB arrested Md Mezbah Uddin, a fourth year civil engineering student of Buet. Mezbah confessed to carrying out the

Shibir vandalises Milk Vita truck during hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 25 picketers, during Wednesday's hartal, vandalised a Tk 50 lakh-worth covered van carrying over 7,000 litres of pasteurised liquid milk of the state-run cooperative dairy Milk Vita in the capital, said an official press release.

Pro-Jamaat student organisation Islami Chhatra Shibir had called the hartal.

The picketers set fire to the vehicle near Azimpur Colony early in the morning, leaving its driver and a salesman injured. However, local salesmen and other van drivers were able to offload the milk.

Initial estimates revealed Tk 12 lakh worth damage to the vehicle, Milk Vita Managing Director Mohammad Munir Chowdhury told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

"Such a vengeful attack on a vehicle carrying an essential food item like milk is unprecedented. Food carrying vehicles are exempted from attacks even during war time as per international human rights charter," he said.

He called upon all to keep food carriers out of hartal purview. Milk Vita lodged a case in this connection with Lalbagh police.

Road crashes kill 11, injure 24

CITY DESK

Eleven people were killed and 24 others injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday and on Wednesday.

Our Chittagong correspondent reports, two people were killed after a truck rammed their bike at Dantmara in Fatikchhari upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

The dead are Sujan Nath, 32, and Md Masud, 20, of the upazila.

Our Bogra correspondent adds, Nuruzzaman Sarkar, 35, a garment worker, of Shibganj upazila, died after a bus hit him at Mohipur in Sherpur upazila yesterday.

A Gopalganj correspondent reports, Mofizur Rahman, 50, teacher of Gopalganj polytechnic institute, died after a three-wheeler hit the motorbike carrying him at Fakirkandi in Gopalganj town on Wednesday.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds, eight people were injured when a bus hit a rickshaw and also van at Malipara village in Bochaganj upazila after the driver lost his control over the steering while racing with another bus yesterday morning.

The injured were admitted to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital. Agitated locals torched both the busses and blocked Dinajpur-Bochaganj road for four hours in protest.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent adds, Mohammad Badsha, 12, son of Liakat Ali, died after a bus ran him over at Gusirapukurpara village in Sadar upazila yesterday.

Our Madaripur correspondent reports, Fuljan Bibi, 65, died after a motorbike hit her before Kalkini Upazila Health Complex on Wednesday night.

Our Narsingdi correspondent adds, three unidentified people were killed and five others injured as an oncoming truck hit a private car at Sristighar in Shibpur upazila yesterday.

Police sent the bodies to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Our Jhenidah correspondent reports, a youth was killed and his mother injured when a bus hit their motorbike near Bokshipur in Shaikupa upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Tokon Joarder, 35. The injured was rushed to Shaikupa local health complex.

Our correspondent, Manikganj adds, a footballer was killed and 10 other people were injured as their pick-up van fell into a roadside ditch at Pouli in Manikganj yesterday.

The deceased was Sukumar Sarker, 14.

SC VERDICT IN MODHUMOTI MODEL TOWN CASE

Lack of full text delays decision on illegal projects

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

About 11 months into announcing the short verdict in the Modhumoti Model Town case, the Supreme Court is yet to release its full text, for which different issues involving unauthorised housing projects and their activities have remained unresolved.

The apex court on August 7 last year declared Modhumoti Model Town near Aminbazar outside Dhaka illegal, as Metro Makers Ltd developed the housing project filling in a 550-acre wetland identified as a floodplain in the 1997 Dhaka City Master Plan.

The Appellate Division announced the short verdict after hearing five separate appeals filed in 2009 challenging different portions of a 2005 High Court verdict. Of them, Metro Makers filed two, while plot purchasers, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), and Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) filed one each.

On July 27, 2005, the HC declared Modhumoti Model Town at Bilamalia and Baliarpur near Aminbazar in Savar "unauthorised, illegal, and against public interest". The court also directed authorities to protect the interests of more than 3,000 plot purchasers but it did not explain how.

Bela Chief Executive Syeda Rizwana Hasan said she expected that the SC in its full verdict in the Modhumoti Model Town case would make observations and guidelines about the government's policy over unauthorised housing projects, thus paving the way for resolving a host of issues. Had the full text been in place, the government could not have allowed other housing companies to illegally develop lands, she told The Daily Star.

Unauthorised projects are reportedly underway on the floodplains of the Buriganga, Turag and Balu along the Dhaka-Mawa highway in Keraniganj, Dhaka-Sylhet highway, around Kanchan Bridge, and in Rugganj of Narayanganj ignoring another HC verdict.

On July 27, 2010, the HC ordered Rajuk and police to take steps to stop earth filling and sale of plots in unauthorised private housing projects and advertisements on them.

As the full SC verdict is not released, lands identified by the Dhaka Master Plan cannot be protected, and the aims of the Water Bodies Act, 2000, the Land Holding Limitation Act, 1973, and the Land Reforms Ordinance, 1984 to determine how much agricultural and non-agricultural land can be possessed by people are yet to be achieved, said Bela's lawyer Iqbal Kabir Lytton.

He said private housing companies' arrogance and corruption in encroaching on and filling in low lands could not be prevented due to the absence of the full SC verdict.

He also said Ashiyani City, a private housing company, could not have built structures on around 230 acres of land in Holan and Ashkona near the capital's Uttara despite being allowed to develop only 43 acres, if the SC guidelines had been available.

Metro Makers Ltd's lawyer barrister ABM Siddiqur Rahman Khan said his client was in darkness about the Modhumoti Model Town project, as SC's full verdict was not released. The housing company cannot decide what it will do about the project and how it will refund the money to the plot purchasers, he said. Khan said they were still unaware of the actual decision of the apex court about the Modhumoti Model Town project.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Md Ekramul Haque, former member of the Pakistan constituent assembly and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, died of old age complications at Pirganj Upazila Health Complex in Thakurgaon on Wednesday. He was 85.

He left behind his wife, six sons and three daughters.

His first namaz-e-janaza will be held today after Asr prayers at Pirganj Public Club ground. He will be buried at his family graveyard at Birholi in the upazila after Maghrib prayers following his second namaz-e-janaza.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 18th death anniversary of Muhammad Ansar Ali, former

justice of the Supreme Court. On this occasion, a Qurankhwani and a milad mahfil will be held today at his village home in Naogaon and also in the capital's Banani graveyard, says a press release.

Kazi Abdul Mannan

CITY DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of Kazi Abdul Mannan, a

businessman. He died on this day last year at the age of 66.

He left behind his wife, a son, daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

All have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



Pankaj Saran, Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, calls on Khaleda Zia, chairperson of the opposition party BNP, at her Gulshan office in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP

Water bus service resumes in Dhaka

BSS, Dhaka

The water bus service was reintroduced in the rivers around the capital yesterday in order to fulfil the long-standing demand of city dwellers desperately seeking relief from the road traffic jam.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan inaugurated the service at Gabtoli Water Bus Landing Station in the capital, saying the commissioning of four more new water buses raised the total number to six.

Each of the two old water buses--"ML Buriganga" and "ML Turag"--has 35 seats while the new four water buses are 81-seater.

The new water buses have been built at a cost of Tk 3 crore while the old two were built for Tk 1.12 crore. The new water buses will run every 45 minutes from 7:00am.

The maximum fare is Tk 40 for the Sadarghat-Gabtoli route, and the minimum fare is Tk 10 for a trip between two landing stations.

Another four modern water buses are also under construction. The present government introduced the water bus service in August 2010 on Sadarghat-Gabtoli route.



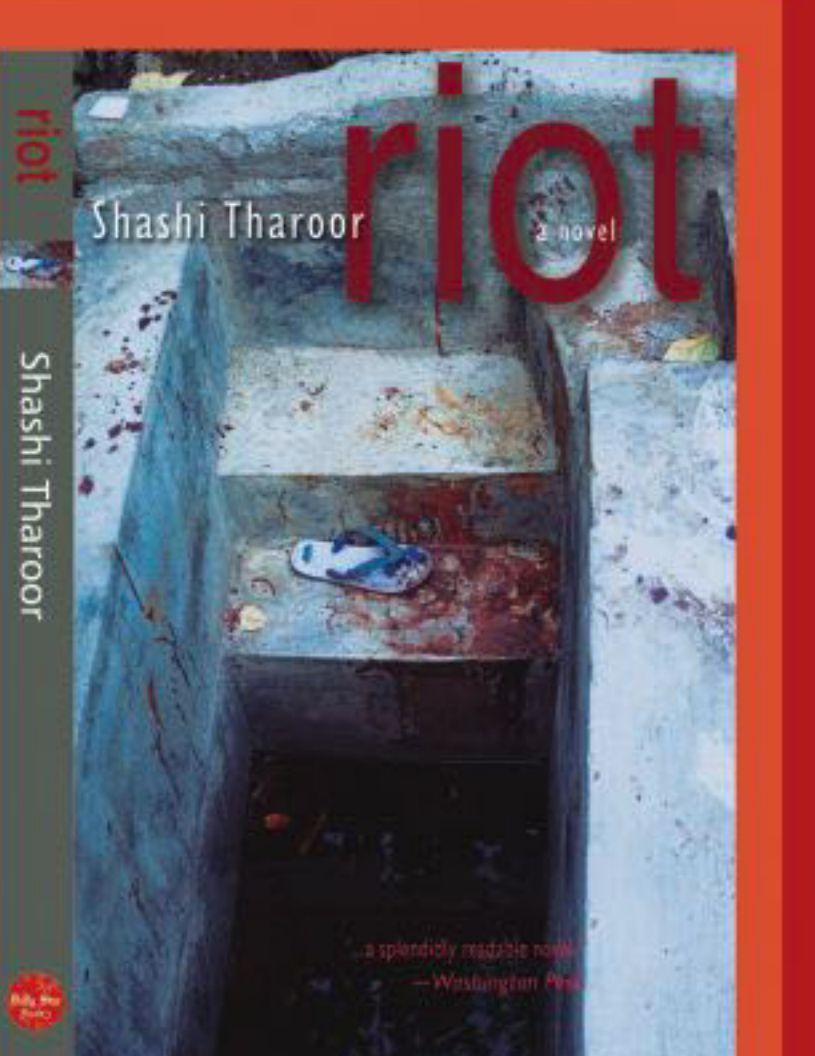
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