

Hefajat accuses police of barring its iftar party

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Hefajat-e Islam leaders yesterday claimed that police had threatened the authorities of a city hotel with arrest if they allowed Hefajat to arrange an iftar party there today.
In a leaflet circulated at Jamaat-e-Islami's iftar party at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel yesterday, Hefajat leaders said the government did not allow them to arrange the iftar party at Hotel Imperial. They planned to host it in honour of political leaders and alem-ulemas, they said.
Hefajat Dhaka city Nayeb-e-Ameer Abul Hasanat, also vice-chairman of Islami Oikya Jote, a component of the BNP-led 18-party alliance, yesterday said, "The hotel authorities informed us today that Paltan police have threatened to arrest their staff and the owner if they give us permission."
Golam Sarwar, officer-in-charge of Paltan Police Station, denied the allegation.



A waterlogged parking lot in front of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital. The car park gets inundated as it does not have a proper drainage system. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Fixing poll-time govt must for next election

Says Menon
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday stressed the need for fixing a poll-time government system to ensure holding of the upcoming general election.
"The country will plunge into a deep crisis and democratic progress will be halted if the election does not take place in due time and an unconstitutional force assumes power," he told a press conference at his party office in the capital.
Menon, whose party is a key member of the Awami League-led grand alliance, reiterated that there might be an all-party interim government that would run only the daily activities.
"The cabinet division, the home, public administration and LGRD ministries will be run under the Election Commission during that time," he suggested. "We want all parties to join the election to make it credible and acceptable to the people and external world."

Ctg city traffic chaos gets worse in Ramadan

UDAY SANKAR DAS
In the month of Ramadan, traffic jam in the port city of Chittagong has become a nemesis because of total mismanagement of vehicles and utter disregard to traffic rules. In many places, road expansion and development works together with construction of flyovers have added to the miseries of vehicle users and the general public.
However, it is thought that if traffic rules were obeyed and police were more active in controlling traffic, people's sufferings could be kept at a more tolerable level.
Traffic jams and mismanagement in Chittagong have been topics of discussion for a long time. The Daily Star even held a roundtable in Chittagong where quite a few points were raised with recommendations to ease the situation to a considerable extent.
The recommendations included setting up of bus stops and construction of bus bays, traffic lights and control of traffic at intersections, adequate footpaths, street lights, and adequate water drainage system.
One of the biggest problems identified is the total absence of maintaining traffic rules coupled with

ineffective mechanised traffic control systems. Most of the traffic lights at the intersections do not work, and where they work, the pressure of traffic is so intense that police find it extremely difficult to keep the traffic flowing in accordance with signal lights.
Subash Barua, a civil engineer, who has done extensive research on traffic and transportation in Chittagong, said, "It is imperative that all major intersections be re-designed to ensure free flow of traffic with a strict parking prohibition within a 500 feet diameter of the intersection centre".
Police controlling traffic manually at various intersections need more training to see that rules are adhered to, he added.
Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that there was a lack of co-ordination with Chittagong City Corporation regarding setting up of signal lights which hampered free flow of traffic.
Islam also cited lack of manpower in the police force, saying there was a shortage of 60 traffic sergeants, and because only sergeants had the power to prosecute, many traffic offenders went unpunished.

A huge number of illegal rickshaws and occupation of footpaths also add to the traffic chaos, especially during the month of Ramadan.
CCC Councillor and Chairman of Environment Standing Committee Jahar Lal Hazari said a meeting was held before Ramadan to look into these problems. "A more effective co-ordination between police and CCC is required to ease the present chaotic situation," he added.
At least 12 intersections in Chittagong have been identified as prone to heavy traffic jam at any time of the day. These places include GEC intersection, Zakir Hussain Road, Muradpur intersection, Oxygen intersection and the entrance to Chaktai-Khatunganj market.
In this situation, Community Police are being deployed at various places to control traffic. In many markets, shop owners are employing their people for traffic management.
Experts say there is a necessity for undertaking a methodical road-expansion programme and enforcing traffic rules. They view that once the present road expansion works and construction of flyovers are completed, the situation could be improved to some extent.

BCL activists lock Cuja office

CU CORRESPONDENT
Chittagong University Journalists' Association (Cuja) filed a written complaint to CU's proctorial body as a faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League CU unit allegedly locked its office on the campus yesterday.
Cuja General Secretary Ashraf Reza said the group, led by CU BCL President Mamunul Hoque, locked their office at Chittagong University Central Student Union (Cucus) building at noon.
"They (BCL men) locked the office without any reason," he alleged.
Cuja Vice President Shariful Islam said they gave CU authorities a 24-hour ultimatum to take steps against those who locked their office.
"This is for the first time an organisation dared to lock Cuja office," he said.
Two BCL students argued with a taxi driver in the university area yesterday morning over a trifling matter that triggered a chase and counter chase between the BCL activists and local people, according to some dailies yesterday.
Denying the allegation, Mamunul Hoque said the news was "false" as BCL men were not involved in the incident. General students locked the Cuja office to protest publishing the news item.
He also alleged that some Islami Chhatra Shibir activists, involved with the association, could play a role to publish the news.
The BCL president said they would file a complaint to the university authorities against the "false propaganda".
Cuja VP Shariful informed that earlier BCL president and general secretary pledged to Cuja that any kind of violence against journalists would not happen on the campus.
Meanwhile, a tense situation was prevailing on CU campus following the chase and counter chase.

Appeal for help

CITY DESK
Sajib Hossain, 24, a boatman in the river Buriganga, is suffering from a severe lung infection.
He requires a long term treatment which would cost at least Tk 5 lakh, says a press release.
Sajib is now admitted to ward no. 3/4, bed -3 of National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital (NIDCH) in Mohakhali of the capital. Sajib's family members earnestly appeal to the affluent section of society for financial help.
Donation can be sent to savings account no. 0161120043752, Al-Arafah Islami Bank, New Elephant Road Branch, Dhaka; cellphone: 01733027190.

Traffic is snarled up at GEC intersection in Chittagong city yesterday. The perennial problem of traffic jam gets worse during Ramadan in the port city due to mismanagement of vehicles and non-compliance with traffic rules.



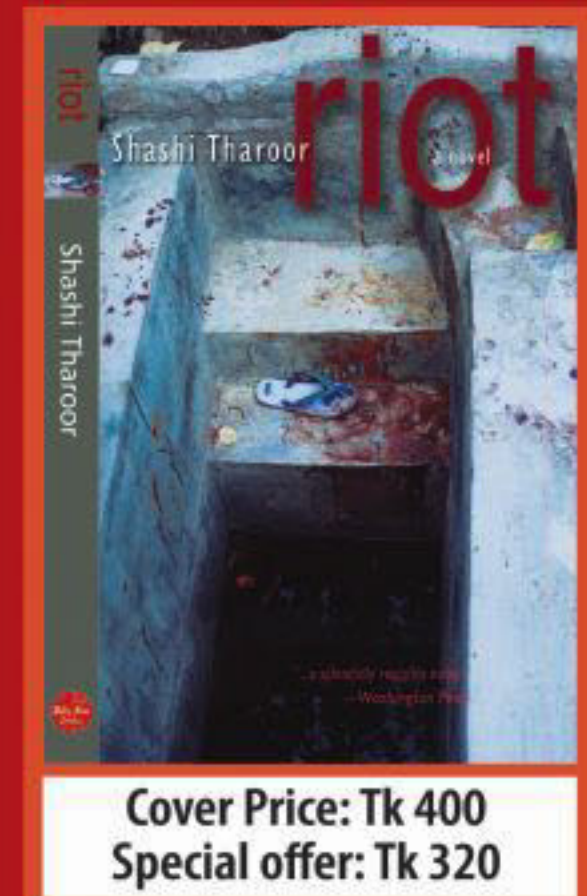
PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Steps to ban Jamaat will come in time

Qamrul tells BBC Bangladesh Sanglap
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The court also suggested that the government ban anti-liberation people from holding key positions in any government, non-government and socio-political bodies.
Gitiara Nasreen said Jamaat was conducting their political activities depending on the big political parties, and its future also lay with the activities of those parties.
The Awami League [government] will not ban Jamaat, observed Nasiruddin. What they [government] are saying about banning Jamaat is a "political stunt", he added.
Hannan said Jamaat would persist as a major political party as the mid-level leaders would fill in the vacuum created by the conviction of its top leaders by war crimes tribunals.
When a female participant asked whether the government should take action against Shafi for his comments that women were like tamarind, and they should stay in homes, Gitiara said action against one Shafi would not be enough. Hannan asked alems to be careful in making such comments.
In the recent war crimes verdicts, there were "elements" required to ban Jamaat-e-Islami, and the government will take "proper action in due time in this regard", State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam told the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap yesterday.
He also said Hefajat-e Islam Ameer Shah Ahmed Shafi in no way could hold the post of chairman of Qawmi Madrasa Education Board after his comments "demeaning" women, which caused a nationwide uproar.
Qamrul was speaking at the dialogue in the capital's Biam auditorium as one of the four panellists alongside political analyst Shah Abdul Hannan, BNP chairperson's adviser Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, and Dhaka University teacher Prof Gitiara Nasreen.
The International Crimes Tribunal-1, in its verdict against former Jamaat chief Ghulam Azam on July 15, termed Jamaat "a criminal organisation" for its Liberation War role.



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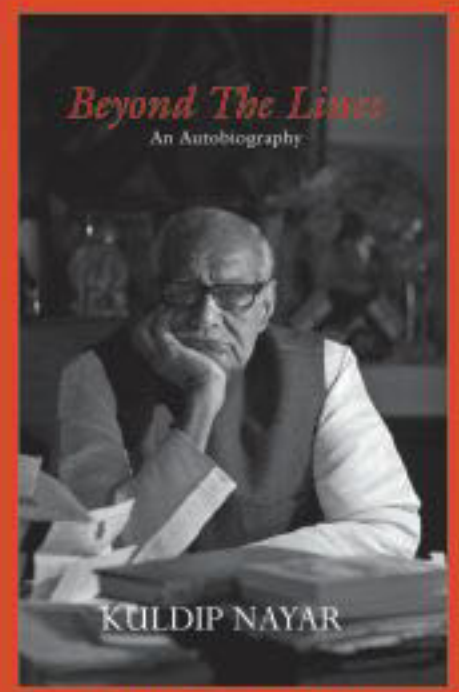


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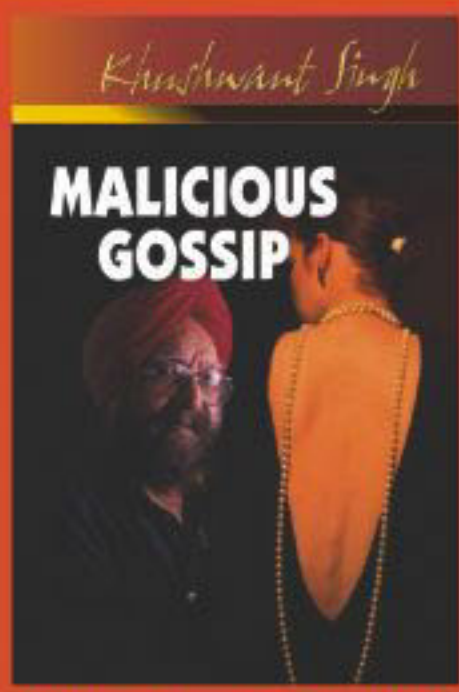
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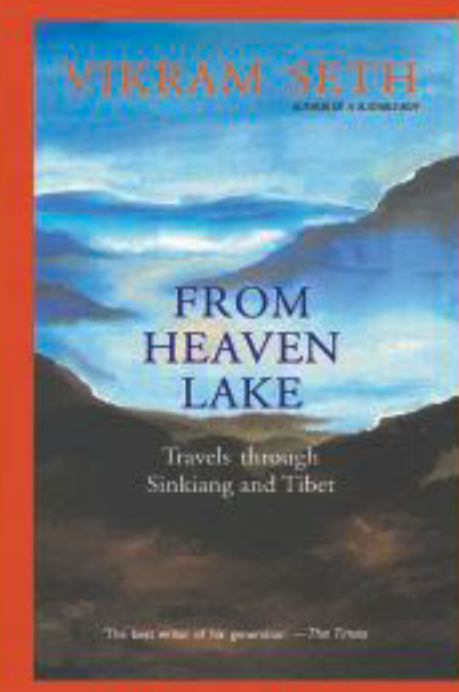
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