

Comilla city mayor gets bail on surrender in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to newly elected Comilla City Corporation Mayor Monirul Hoque Shakoo after he surrendered before it in a corruption case of 2008.

It fixed May 24 for starting hearing on charge framing against the BNP leader in the case.

Shahin Ara Momtaz, an assistant director of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), filed the case against Shakoo and his wife with Ramna Police Station on January 7 for their alleged involvement in amassing Tk 4.57 crore illegally and concealing wealth statement of Tk 1.12 crore.

On April 18, the court issued an arrest warrant against Shakoo. The acceptance of the charge sheet by the court has created a scope for the government to suspend Shakoo, who won the Comilla mayor election on March 30.

Election Commission sources said the EC on the same day issued a gazette notification paving the way for him to take oath as the Comilla city mayor.

Sources said the prime minister would administer the oath to Shakoo at 10:30pm tomorrow at the Prime Minister's Office.

According to sections 12 and 13 of the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009, a mayor or a councillor, if convicted or charge sheeted in criminal cases, can be suspended.

The act also says any elected representative can be removed from office for skipping three consecutive general meetings without any valid reason.

In recent years, several mayors, upazila chairmen and vice chairmen loyal to BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami were suspended after they were indicted in similar criminal cases.



Commuter and pedestrian sufferings on Rokeya Sarani near Sher-e-Bangla Agriculture University in the capital have become a day-to-day affair for nearly a month now as different utility service providers have been relocating their service lines in preparation for the city's first metro rail project occupying a major portion of a side of the thoroughfare. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Commission on cards to identify culprits behind false graft allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is in the process of forming a commission to identify the persons who had fabricated allegations of corruption in the Padma bridge project.

The government said this in a report to the High Court yesterday in response to a February 15 suo moto ruling. The report was submitted to the HC by Assistant Attorney General Titus Hillol Rema.

According to the report, high government officials in a meeting on May 5 decided that the law ministry would form the commission after issuing a gazette notification under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1956.

The HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ull-Hoque and Justice Mohammad Ullah accepted the report and fixed July 3 for passing an order on the matter.

On February 15, the same bench ordered the government to explain in two weeks as to why it should not be directed to form an enquiry for identifying the "culprits who made up false

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Barisal river accidents keep on recurring

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barisal

Launches and other watercrafts are the main mode of transport in Barisal region crisscrossed by rivers. But in the absence of an adequate number of safe water vessels, people have to resort to unfit passenger-carrying launches.

Cashing in on the rush of passengers, a section of water transport owners are using their old and unfit vessels in southern river routes from Barisal. Many of these vessels do not have registration while others are operating without fitness.

Due to the rickety condition, these water vessels fall into accidents, taking toll on human lives every now and then.

There is no official data on how many people died in marine accidents in the region. This correspondent talked to BIWIA officials, passengers, eyewitnesses and locals. A rough estimate says no less than 43

people died and over hundred injured in 24 such accidents in the region in the last two years. According to their accounts, 38 persons died and 85 persons injured in nineteen marine accidents last year, while 5 persons died and twenty injured in five accidents this year.

On September 21, 2016, a launch named Oishi sank into the Sandhya river near Banaripara Launch Ghat under Banaripara upazila in the district with fifty passengers on board. At least 26 died in that accident.

Oishi did not have any permission to carry passengers as it was basically a trawler later transformed into a launch, Additional Deputy Commissioner Zakir Hossain told The Daily Star.

The unsound condition of the vessel is responsible for the accident, added Zakir, also chairman of the probe committee

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NO END TO BLOODSPILL ON ROADS



The mangled bus that hit a roadside tree in Jessore yesterday.

Six die, 35 hurt as bus hits roadside tree

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Six people were killed and 35 others injured as a bus crashed into a roadside tree in Jessore yesterday afternoon.

The accident took place as the driver of the Kushtia-bound bus from Khulna was trying to overtake another bus in Barinagar Bazar area of Jessore-Jhenaidaha road in Sadar upazila of the district, said KM Azmal Huda, officer-in-charge of Jessore Kotwali Police Station.

"The driver lost his control over the steering, veered off the road and crashed into a roadside tree," the OC added.

Three of the passengers died on the spot and three others succumbed to their injuries at Jessore General Hospital, he added.

Four of the deceased were identified as Ram Prashad, 40, son of Tarapado Biswas, of Badurgacha village of Jhenaidaha; Rejia Begum, 40, daughter of Lokman Hossain in Jessore town; and Arobindo Roy, 50, and his wife Eti Rani Roy, 42, of Magura.

The identities of two of the deceased could not be known.

"The driver and helper of the bus fled the scene of the accident. Drive is underway to arrest them," said the OC.

Sabbir Hossain, a resident of Jessore town and a passenger of the bus, said, "From the beginning, the driver was speeding. There were fifty of us inside the bus. The accident took place as the driver tried to overtake another bus."

The injured are undergoing treatment at the hospital. Most of them are in a critical condition, said the doctors.

Student meets tragic end

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Mostafizur Rahman Bablu was getting late for taking tuition at a coaching centre yesterday morning.

Much to his mother's dismay, the 14-year-old hurriedly finished his breakfast and hopped on his bicycle.

But little did anyone know this would be his last meal.

As the ninth grader of Sonali Jute Mill High School reached Phulbari Gate rail crossing area in Khulna city around 10:00am, a speeding truck hit him from behind.

Bablu died on the spot, while the driver fled with the vehicle.

"Despite our struggles, we made sure that he continued his studies," said Fazlu Sarder, the grief-stricken father.

The resident of Sonali Jute Mill Colony in the city said he used to work at the mill, which shut down around two years ago. Since then, he has been working as a rickshaw-van driver to support his ten-member family.



Mother of road accident victim, Bablu, waits at their house.

PHOTO: STAR

"My son was my strength. He was an exceptional student. We all wanted him to become educated and do well in life."

"There's no word to describe my pain. No one can replace my son..." Fazlu could not finish the sentence.

The body was sent to Khulna Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

"We are trying to arrest the driver," said Abu Hassan, sub-inspector of Khanjahan Ali Thana.

He said after the incident, agitated locals blocked the Khulna-Jessore highway for around 30 minutes, creating a huge traffic jam in the area.



Little kids bathe in the Karnaphuli river to cool themselves off on a hot summer day yesterday. The mercury reached 33.5 degrees Celsius in the port city on the day. The photo was taken in Firingi Bazar area.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Man 'kills himself after killing wife' in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A drug addict allegedly committed suicide after killing his wife in Siddhirganj of Narayanganj yesterday morning, said police.

At one stage of a quarrel, Mosharrif Hossain, 42, a truck driver, forced his two children out of the house around 6:30pm and hacked Mitu Akhter, 32, to death, said police, adding that he later changed himself from the crafter of his Majhpara house's ceiling.

Police sent the bodies to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsies.

Ctg Jubo League leader's floating body found in sack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Jubo League leader's body was found floating in a canal in Fatikchhari upazila of Chittagong last evening two days after he had gone missing.

The body was stuffed inside a sack.

Mohammad Enam, 36, president of Abdullahpur union unit of youth wing of Awami League, did not return home after he went to a nearby market around 6:30pm on Sunday, said his wife Shahana Akhter Jannat.

Locals first noticed the sack floating in the canal. Upon opening the sack, they found a decomposing body inside, said Fatikchhari Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Abu Yusuf Mia, adding, the body bore ligature marks on the neck.

Local UP chairman and co-villagers confirmed the identity of the body, the OC said.

Shahana filed a general diary (GD) with the police station on Monday, said OC Yusuf Mia.

Later, a person called her from her husband's cellphone demanding Tk 1.2 lakh as ransom, alleged Shahana. The OC said they are trying to locate the caller.

AL is the law now

Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"What Awami League says is the law now and trials are held as per directives of the ruling party," BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said criticising the prime minister for curtailing freedom of the judiciary.

"She herself has destroyed the rule of law and took away the independence of the judiciary. Because of it, the people of the country are in discomfort and they can't live in peace," he said referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's remarks in the parliament about the chief justice.

Fakhrul made the comments at a discussion in the city's Jatiya Press Club, marking ex-BNP assistant organising secretary

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Forensics personnel of Rapid Action Battalion under a mobile court conduct tests for contraband chemicals inside a warehouse on Mitford Road in the capital yesterday. The court collected Tk 8 lakh in fines for various violations and sentenced four persons to different jail terms "for storing illegal chemicals used for making explosives".

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN