

SAND LIFTING IN PADMA RIVER HC questions inaction of authorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of the government's inaction and failure to take appropriate steps to stop lifting sand illegally from the bank of the Padma River in Godagari of Rajshahi.

It issued a rule asking the respondents to explain in four weeks why their inaction and failure to take appropriate steps to stop such activities should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the court also asked them to reply why they should not be directed to take immediate steps to stop illegal lifting of sand from various areas near the riverbanks of the Padma and to protect the areas from river erosion and damage of embankments at Godagari.

Secretaries to the ministries of water resources, environment and forest, shipping, home affairs, local government and rural development, law, justice and parliamentary affairs and land, director general of Water Development Board and 10 others have been made respondents to the rule.

The bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan issued the rule after hearing a writ petition filed by Barrister Mahfuzur Rahman, executive director of rights organisation Justice Watch Foundation, seeking necessary order on the respondents to stop illegal sand lifting from the riverbank areas.

Citing from the petition, Barrister Mahfuzur told The Daily Star that dishonest traders have been reportedly lifting sand illegally from the Padma situated in Godagari causing river erosion and damage to embankments or levees of the river.

But, the respondents don't take necessary steps to stop such activities, he added.



Several of the 22 hajj pilgrims who arrived yesterday morning at the Ashkona Hajj Camp in the capital. These elderly devotees have been spending anxious hours as their flight tickets were not confirmed till the afternoon. Although they made payments to a hajj agency in 2016, they could not complete their pilgrimage back then due to errors made by the agency.

HOUSING PROJECTS SC halts all activities of Ashiyon City until further order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday extended its August 2016 order that issued an injunction barring Ashiyon City from all activities including selling plots and publishing advertisements.

The SC also stayed last year's August 16 High Court order that scrapped an earlier HC verdict declaring the housing project in the capital's Uttara and adjacent areas illegal.

The SC also allowed the government and eight rights organisations to move two separate appeals before this court against the HC's last year's August 16 verdict.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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DEATH OF SALMAN SHAH Suicide or murder? US expatriate's claim that the actor was murdered triggers fresh debate

UNB, Dhaka

"Salman Shah didn't kill himself, he was murdered," claims an accused in the case filed over the death of famed actor Salman.

Currently an expatriate in the US, Rabeya Sultana Rubi's recent video post has gone viral on social media.

"Salman Shah didn't kill himself, he was murdered. My husband (John) planned it and my brother accomplished it. Samira's family [Salman Shah's wife] was the mastermind behind the killing. A Chinese community member completed the task," she claimed in the video clip. The accused said she will do everything to prove her point right. "They also tried to kill me. So I am on the run as I am the last person who can prove it as killing. Now they are trying to kill me as the case may be reopened anytime."

She also asked Salman's mother Nilufar Chowdhury to urge for a reinvestigation.



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Health, education scarce in Dhaka slums: ASK report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The status of education, health, and gender parity in the slums of Dhaka city is poorer than the national average, according to a new report of rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).

While the education scenario is frustrating, violence against women in the slums is regarded as acceptable even by women themselves, the report shows. It also says slum dwellers pay more for utility services compared to better-off urban areas.

The "People's Development Justice Report" was disclosed at a programme in the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday. ASK took help of the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development while preparing the report.

The report says around 6.33 percent of urban population is slum dwellers, but it did not give any comparative

figures on the aforementioned indicators.

Presenting a keynote paper, Subarna Dhar, coordinator of the Women 2030 Project: National Monitoring and Review of Sustainable Development Goals for ASK, said the study was conducted on people living in informal settlements in the capital.

She said they prepared the report after taking SDG no. 4, 5, 11 and 16 as focus areas. While preparing it, the ASK team used secondary data and conducted group discussions and consultations for six months from January.

In his speech, Prof Shamsul Alam, member (senior secretary), General Economic Division of the Planning Commission, said ASK's initiative reflected field-level scenario, which would help taking plans to implement the government's Vision 2041.

Chairing the event, ASK Executive Director Sheeba Hafiza urged the government to consider their recommendations while making development plans.

Acid Survivor Foundation Executive Director Selina Ahmed praised the report as a participatory plan to achieve sustainable development.

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Mentioning that the country has the highest rate of child marriage in Asia and fourth highest in the world, the report also called for repeal of a special provision of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017, which allows underage marriage in special circumstances.

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DSCC to utilise guppies to curb mosquito-borne diseases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) will release guppy fishes in drainage and sewerage lines to curb mosquito-borne diseases, including chikungunya, said DSCC Mayor Sayeed Khokon yesterday.

Addressing a programme in the city, Khokon said a guppy fish is able to eat at least 50 mosquito larvae every day and thus contribute to slow spread of malaria.

He emphasised mass awareness against the menaces of chikungunya and dengue.

He said around 1,577 chikungunya patients were given treatment at homes in different parts of his area and campaigns were conducted against such epidemic.

Dhaka-Ctg double-decker bus soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wait for a lavish bus journey between Dhaka and Chittagong cities is almost over.

By the end of this month, people will be able to hop on a double-decker deluxe bus to travel between the two prime destinations of the country.

Private transport operator Green Line Paribahan is making this possible with ten such brand-new imported buses.

The buses will hit the road after August 20 following completion of necessary formalities and one-way fare for each



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Saudi Chief of General Staff General Abdul Rahman Al-Bunaiyan meets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday.

Bangladesh can be strategic ally of KSA

PM tells Saudi chief of general staff

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday emphasised increasing cooperation between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia in the fields of training of the armed forces personnel and construction of military infrastructure.

"Bangladesh may become a strategic partner of Saudi Arabia with extensive training cooperation, capacity building, military infrastructure construction, shipbuilding and export of Bangladeshi military products," she said when Saudi Chief of General Staff Gen Abdul Rahman Al-Bunaiyan met her at her Gono Bhaban in Dhaka.

Earlier, Chief of Defence Forces of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Surapong Suwana-adth called on Hasina at Gono Bhaban.

N'GANJ FIVE-MURDER Lone accused gets death penalty on five counts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday gave a man death penalty for five times yesterday for murdering his two aunts, two cousins and another of the same family in Narayanganj last year.

Mahfuz Mia, 30, the lone accused in the murder case, who was in the courtroom, was also fined Tk 5,000, said Public Prosecutor Wazed Ali Khokhon.

Narayanganj District and Sessions Judge Begum Hosne Ara Akter delivered the verdict.

The judgement will be executed if the convict is hanged one time, said PP Wazed Ali.

The court passed the order against Mahfuz considering the murder charges separately, he said.

On January 16 in 2016, Mahfuz killed his aunts Taslima Begum and Lamia, 25; and Taslima's two

children Sumaiya, 5, and Shantu, 10; and Taslima's brother Morshedul, 22, one after another, according to the prosecution.

Police recovered their bloodstained bodies from their house in Baburail of Narayanganj city on that night.

The next day, Shafiqul Islam, husband of Taslima, filed the murder case against unidentified miscreants with Narayanganj Sadar Police Station. Mahfuz was arrested on that day.

According to Mahfuz's confessional statement, he had extramarital affairs with Lamia. As the incident came to light, he was disgraced by the family. And he killed the five out of anger.

The victims' family wanted speedy execution of the verdict.

The defence counsel Sultanuzzaman said the convict will appeal to the High Court.



Mahfuz Mia is being taken to the court before the verdict yesterday.

4 muggers to die for killing woman in Dohar

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced four people to death for killing 70-year-old woman Ayesha Megum at Dohar upazila of Dhaka in 2008.

The convicts are: Razon Khan, Shahnaz Begum, Sumon Bayati and Fazal alias Fazul of Ghatapara of the upazila.

Judge Ahsan Tarique of the Eight Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka handed down the verdict to the four accused who are now in jail.

After cross-examination of all 17 prosecution witnesses, the court gave the sentence. The accused had given confessional statements before magistrates during the investigation.

According to the prosecution, the convicts abducted Ayesha Begum from in front of her residence while she was walking after Ifar on September 13, 2008. Later, they snatched away her gold ornaments and killed her as she could recognise them.

Following the incident, victim's son filed a murder case with Dohar Police Station.



Lamia Taslima Morshedul Shantu Sumaiya

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