

YABA TRADING AL lawmaker accuses media of smear campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi yesterday in parliament called on Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to save him from the media's propaganda that he is involved in illegal Yaba business.

"Honourable Speaker, I want to urge our home minister through you to save me from the media's propaganda which always carries a smear campaign against me even after our home minister gave a statement in the House about me [on Yaba trade]," Bodi said while participating in a thanksgiving motion on the president's speech.

The lawmaker from

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Police brutality clip surfaces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A video clip of police brutality on a young girl went viral on the social media yesterday.

In the video footage, with the boundary wall of the Bangabhaban in the background, a member of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) was repeatedly slapping the girl in her face while another of his colleagues was trying to drag her from the median of the road to its side.

The brutal assault on the girl, barefooted and seemingly in her adolescent age, caused quite an uproar in the social media. However, the identity of the person who recorded or uploaded the nearly 30-second video clip could not be known.

A member of traffic police, also in the scene, was unsuccessfully trying to move away the black duffel bag the girl was carrying. At one stage the policeman (who was trying to drag the girl) took notice of the incident being filmed and furiously approached the person behind the camera.

He along with several other onlooker members of the law enforcers appeared to be engaged in a scuffle with him while they tried to snatch his device.

Contacted, Mohammed Siraj Amin, additional deputy commissioner of DMP's Protection Division, said they have learnt that the incident took place moments before the president was about to get out of the Bangabhaban to attend a programme in Jessore. "The way the matter was dealt with, wasn't appropriate. We're trying to identify the policemen discharging duties on the spot at the time," he said, adding that they would take action against the responsible law enforcers.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with graduates at the graduation ceremony of Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Mirpur Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS



JOY OF READING IS FOR EVERYONE... Visually impaired youths going through Braille version of books at "Sporsho Braille Prokashona" at Bangla Academy yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Braille books insufficient

MATHEWS CHIRAN

Like most of the girls of her age, 25-year-old Ripa Tabassum loves poetry, romance novels and at times horrors.

For her, the joy of reading is woven into every aspect of her life. Not a day goes by she does not dream of partaking in a literary journey.

But the journey is not an easy one as she is visually impaired. For visually impaired people, there are not many books available in Braille.

To help the visually impaired take delight in reading, "Sporsho Braille Prokashona" has brought out 14 books in Braille at the Amar Ekushey Granthamela this year.

Sporsho has been publishing books in Braille since 2009. Since its invention in 1824, Braille, a tactile writing system for the visually impaired, has been a gift to millions.

"I first came to the book fair in 2008 along with my friends. Every one was buying and reading books except me," said Ripa. "I stopped coming to the book fair afterwards. However, in 2013, my friends forcibly took me to the fair again. They took me to a stall named 'Sporsho'. I met its founder Nazia Jabeen there."

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Nazia gave her a Braille book to read. Ripa started reading it right away. "I surprised Nazia apu with my reading speed...", said a smiling Ripa in front of "Sporsho" at Bangla Academy yesterday.

Ripa said she became a member of "Sporsho" instantly.

"Sporsho" has been providing the visually impaired with books free of cost since 2011 at the book fair.

"So far, we have published Braille version of 61 books," said its founder Nazia. "But it is not enough."



"The visually impaired has the same rights... If Bangla Academy publishes books in Braille for them as well as compel big publishers to do the same, they [visually impaired] can also enjoy reading more books," she said.

The demand for Braille books are increasing. "We publish the books with support of various quarters. Sometimes, famous writers also publish their books in Braille with their own finance," she added.

Visually impaired Shahinul Haque Joy, a former student of Dhaka University, said, "I love to read. I wish there were more Braille books and

Road accidents claim 13 lives in 5 districts

STAR REPORT

At least 13 people including five members of a family were killed in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports, Abdus Saheed, 70, Azizun Nahar, 50, Ayesha Begum, 26, Hasnaful, 60 and Sabbir Ahmed, 26 were killed when a bus smashed their car in South Sunamganj upazila.

Police said quoting locals that the speeding bus smashed the private car and killed all five including the driver on spot.

In Faridpur, Abul Sheikh, 35, Khalada Begum, 25, Mizanur Sheikh, 40, Sukur Ali Munshi, 40, and Abul Sheikh were killed as a bus ran over an easy-bike on Dhaka-Khulna Highway, police said.

Ajfal Hossan, sub-inspector of Bhangra Highway Police Station said, "We recovered the bodies and sent those to Faridpur Medical College morgue for autopsies."

In Sirajganj, schoolboy Shakil Ahmed, 7, was killed when a Siragganj-bound bus knocks him down while crossing the road in Shialkole area of Sirajganj Sadar upazila killing him on the spot, police said.

In Dinajpur, madrasa principal Zahangir Alam, 55, was killed when a sand laden tractor hit his motorcycle in Rangpur town killing him on the spot, police said quoting locals.

Meanwhile, an alleged robber was killed and six others injured in Sapahar upazila of Naogaon.

Shamsul Alam, officer-in-charge of Sapahar Police Station, said the accident took place during a robbery when a truck hit them, leaving them injured critically. The unidentified man died later at a hospital.

Peace, not war

Says PM about country's motto at graduation ceremony of Defence Services Command and Staff College

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh does not want war as the country is working for peace, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

"We don't want war, we want peace. We run the state following the principle of 'friendship to all, malice to none'... Bangladesh has cordial and friendly relations with most of the countries," she said.

The premier said this while delivering a speech at the graduation ceremony of Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) at Sheikh Hasina Complex of Mirpur Cantonment.

Terming the country's armed forces a symbol of independence, Hasina said they are now much more developed, efficient and intelligent.

Alongside carrying out the responsibility of protecting the country's independence and sovereignty, the mem-

bers of the armed forces are also making significant contributions towards tackling natural disasters, she said.

"They've also been assisting the civil administration for the country's development activities, construction of infrastructures, elimination of militancy and terrorism, and maintaining the law and order," she added.

Commandant of the College Maj Gen AKM Abdullah Baquee delivered the welcome speech.

A total of 266 officers, including 136 officers from the army, 40 from the navy and 22 from Air Force, and 68 from various countries graduated from the college this year.

On her arrival, Hasina was received by the commandant.

The PM directed the graduates to remain ready to undertake a higher leadership role as well as be more confident in facing challenges.

She mentioned that the armed

forces are contributing significantly towards peacekeeping, social development and spreading education in various countries under the emblem of UN mission, brightening the country's image.

Referring to the victory in the maritime boundary cases, Hasina said the Navy has been made a three-dimensional force for utilising sea resources. The potential "Blue Economy" door has been opened following the victory.

Hasina expressed her satisfaction as a remarkable number of female officers are graduating every year, which indicates "women empowerment" in the country.

She expressed her firm belief that the knowledge the graduating officers

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PROPOSED DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Revoke all 'repressive' sections

Demands Workers Party of Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party of Bangladesh has demanded revoking all the "repressive" sections including section 32 of the proposed Digital Security Act, 2018.

In a statement yesterday, the party's politburo said the government, in the face of citizen's demand, considered abolishing section 57 of the ICT Act and removed concerns from people's mind.

But greater apprehension and anxiety grew among them with the approval of the draft of the new law, it said.

"Although section 57 has been repealed in the proposed law, it has been replaced in a new and harsher way in different sections of the proposed law," says the

statement of the Workers Party, which is a partner of ruling Awami League in the government.

If the sections were kept, it will not only hamper the freedom of journalism and journalists but also threaten the freedom of expression of all, the statement observes.

The politburo, in which Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon is a member, said scopes are there for widespread misuse of section 57 in light of section 32 and some other sections of the proposed law.

"These sections will particularly greatly obstruct investigative reporting," reads the statement, adding, the Workers Party does not deny but considers the need for a law to deal with cybercrimes.

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Politicisation to blame for DU's slide

Says Dr Kamal at launch of 'University of Dhaka: Making Unmaking and Remaking'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted academicians and a jurist yesterday underscored the need for forming a commission that will work for the improvement of Dhaka University (DU) so it could make place among the 100 most prestigious universities across the world.

They were addressing a discussion yesterday marking the launch of a book titled, "University of Dhaka: Making Unmaking and Remaking", at the Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhavan of DU.

Offering his assistance for the commission, noted jurist Dr Kamal Hossain said, "The University had a golden past....Form a commission that will work explicitly for the improvement of Dhaka University."

Dr Kamal said the condition of education at DU has declined due to politicisation of

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HC summons judge for delay in case disposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday summoned the joint district judge of Narayanganj to appear before it on February 13 to explain the non-disposal of a civil suit filed over faulty meters and charging extra electricity bill.

Earlier, the High Court had ordered the lower court judge to settle the case by November 30, 2008.

The four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain issued the order while hearing an appeal filed by Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd against the High Court verdict.

In 2006 the plaintiff, a private company filed the civil case with a Narayanganj court praying it to declare illegal the 12 months' electricity bill that Titas Gas claimed from it.

The company argued that the meters were faulty and Titas Gas claimed extra money, and prayed to be allowed to pay Tk three lakh per month as the electricity

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JATIYA SANGSAD

Petition seeks 10pc FF representation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A rights organisation yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court, seeking its order on the government to preserve 10 percent seats for the freedom fighters in parliament and local government institutions.

"Barura Shikkha and Manob Kalyan Trust" submitted the petition, also challenging the government's inaction for not preserving the 10 percent seats.

In the petition, the rights body Chairman Advocate Md Arifur Rahman Majumder said thousands of brilliant sons of this soil actively participated in the 1971 Liberation War.

For the advancement of their (freedom fighters) works, it is

necessary to have their own representation. For this, a quota has to be preserved in parliament for the freedom fighters to be elected to point out prevailing problems and a systematic solution to those.

He also played to the issue a rule upon the respondents to explain why their inaction to preserve 10 percent seats for the freedom fighters should not be declared illegal.

Secretary to the liberation war affairs ministry, chairman of Bangladesh Mukti Joddha Command Council and law secretary have been made respondents to the rule.

Advocate Arifur Rahman told The Daily Star that the HC may hold a hearing on the petition next Sunday.



HOW TO KILL A RIVER... The place where these workers are unloading garbage from trucks and rickshaw vans was once a part of the river Buriganga. The vehicles are clearly marked with the name "Dhaka South City Corporation" that is entrusted with the city's wellbeing and maintenance. Such encroachment and pollution is rampant on all sides of the endangered river.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN