

PM for boost in waterways connectivity with India

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday emphasised strengthening waterways connectivity between Bangladesh and India, in a bid to promote trade and commerce between the two countries.

Hasina discussed the issue of increasing the connectivity, when Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das paid a courtesy call at the premier's official residence, Gono Bhaban.

Ihsanul Karim, the premier's press secretary, briefed reporters after the meeting.

During the meeting, Sheikh Hasina and Riva Ganguly discussed various bilateral issues of interest, he said..

Md Nojibur Rahman, PM's principal secretary, was also present at the meeting.



Riva Ganguly Das paid a courtesy call at the PM's official residence, Gono Bhaban.

PHOTO: BSS

REMISSION OF SENTENCE BY PRESIDENT

SC orders immediate release of Azmat Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has directed the government to immediately release Azmat Ali, a former school teacher from Pakhimara village under Sharishabari upazila of Jamalpur, from jail as he was arrested in 2009 even after the president pardoned him in 1991.

The apex court also observed that the decision of sending Azmat Ali to jail even after getting the order of release from jail custody in view of the remission of his sentence granted by the president under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) was "unjustified and unfortunate".

The Appellate Division of the SC came up with the order and observation in a full text of its judgement which was released yesterday.

A six-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, passed the short order on June 27 on a review petition filed by Azmat Ali with support from the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee.

The review petition was filed with the SC against its verdict on August 11, 2010 that had scrapped a High Court judgement acquitting Azmat from the charge of the case

filed for killing one Rezaul Karim in 1987.

In the review petition, Azmat informed the apex court of the president's order that granted him mercy and prayed for his release, Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee sources said.

In the full text of judgement, the SC said the petitioner Azmat Ali, son of Tazzat Ullah Sardar of Pakhimara village under Sharishabari Upazila, was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by the sessions judge's court of Jamalpur on March 9, 1989 in connection with the case.

Following an appeal filed by Azmat Ali, the HC on March 2, 2005 acquitted him of the charges.

The state filed an appeal with the SC in 2008 challenging the HC verdict and after hearing the state's appeal, the Appellate Division on February 20, 2008 scrapped the HC judgement and order.

Earlier on August 21, 1996, Azmat was released from jail in view of the remission of sentence granted by the president on January 14, 1991.

But after delivery of the Appellate Division's judgement, Azmat was again arrested on October 20, 2009 and since then he has been in jail, the SC said in the

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66 univ teachers extend support to Prof ABM Faroque

DU CORRESPONDENT

Sixty-six teachers from different universities of the country yesterday issued a statement extending their support to Prof ABM Faroque, who recently conducted two tests on milk samples of various companies.

Prof Fahmidul Haq of Dhaka University's mass communication and journalism department issued it on behalf of University Teachers' Network, a platform for teachers.

"Through mass media and some other sources, we came to know that companies concerned and some government bureaucrats attacked him using offensive language and put pressure on him as soon as the study result was disclosed. Under these circumstances, we too are feeling vulnerable like Prof Faroque," the statement said.

"Even under these circumstances, he again detected antibiotics in milk samples in his second round of testing and disclosed the result, considering public health," it added.

The teachers' platform said that they would not have known that Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institution (BSTI) has no mechanism to detect antibiotics had the study result not been disclosed.

"The government authorities could have ended the doubt in people's mind over milk quality by conducting further tests, if they doubt Prof Faroque's study," the statement further said.

Teachers and researchers will lose interest towards research and freethinking will diminish, if this trend continues, it added.

They alleged that the university administration is not protecting teachers. Rather the university authority is putting pressure on him in different ways, the teachers added.

They urged the government and university authorities to take proper initiatives to encourage such public health related research.

NEW DORMS AT JU

Decision to chop down 1,100 trees draws ire of students, teachers

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN, JU

Jahangirnagar University authorities' decision to cut down over 1,100 trees -- to make way for five to-be-constructed dormitories -- have drawn the ire of students and teachers.

Under a development project worth Tk 1,445 crore, JU authorities have initiated to construct five 10-storey residential dormitories -- three for male and two for female students.

On June 30, the university authorities laid foundation stones of the dorms.

Terming it "unplanned development", several students and teachers' groups have raised concerns and urged the authorities to move away from the decision.

They alleged that the university authorities made the master plan without consulting different stakeholders of the university.

Construction companies have primarily marked around 1,132 trees on the campus to chop down -- mostly teak, rain tree, mango, pine, mahogany, korai, Golap Jam, Indian gooseberry (amlaki), elephant apple (chalta), jackfruit and other species, including some endangered ones.

A lush green area on the campus, popularly known as "Santiniketan" among students, has been selected to build the male dormitories, triggering criticism among former and current students, who say they



Authorities have marked a number of trees to be cut down. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

want infrastructures, but not at the cost of deforestation. Teachers and students, under the banner of "Teachers-Students Unity Platform", staged demonstrations on campus and submitted a memorandum to Vice-Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam with seven-point demand last Monday.

Visiting the spots, this correspondent

found around 897 trees marked near Bishwakabi Rabindranath Tagore Hall, where the three male dorms will be constructed.

To build the two female dormitories, a total of 207 trees will have to be cut down, adjacent to the Tarzan Point of the campus, a popular hangout spot for students.

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FORGING DOCS TO SECURE BAIL

High Court orders to file case against five

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed its registrar to file a case against five persons -- including three accused in a drug case -- on the charge of securing bail through forged documents from the court.

It also cancelled their bail orders, and ordered police to arrest the accused -- Rana Bepari, Mosammat Tanni Begum and Ranu Begum -- and produce them before a Khulna court concerned in the case.

The other two are Asad Moral, representative of the three, and Aiyub Ali, their lawyer's clerk.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order, after discovering forgery during hearing a bail petition filed by Md Suman, another accused of the same case.

Advocate Tashdid Anwar, lawyer for Rana, Tanni and Ranu, told The Daily Star that the police arrested four people -- Rana, Tanni, Ranu and Suman -- after recovering 3,000 yaba pills from their possession.

A case was filed with Dumuria Police Station in Khulna on March 6 this year.

On June 17, the HC bench granted six months' bail to Rana, Tanni and Ranu.

The accused submitted a forged certified copy of the first information report (FIR) of the case along with the bail petition to the HC.

The petition said that police did not recover any yaba from them, he said.

Advocate Tashdid said lawyer's clerk Aiyub Ali collected the forged documents for securing bail for Rana, Tanni and Ranu.

Later on, Suman, another accused of the case who is currently in jail, filed the bail petition and submitted several documents including the certified copy of the FIR, saying that police seized 3,000 yaba pills from the accused.

The HC bench also rejected the petition filed by Suman seeking bail, said Advocate Tashdid.

Prioritise children in climate change projects: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children should get the highest priority in climate change projects as they are the worst victims of the adverse climatic impacts, experts said at a discussion yesterday.

They also urged people across the globe to ensure their individual responsibilities in minimising climate change as it is one of the biggest global concerns now.

Non-government organisations Save the Children and Community Participation and Development, and Brac University jointly organised the discussion titled "Climate Financing and Children" in Dhaka's Brac Centre.

Forty children from different schools in the capital took part in the

discussion where they demanded that the government take their opinions while making decisions regarding climate issues and initiate specialised schemes for them.

"The impact of climate change is the highest for children -- the 30 percent of the world's population," said Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed, director (environment and climate change) of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation.

About six million of them are the most vulnerable, who live near river erosion areas and coastal belts like Bangladesh, he added, referring to recent UN data.

Noted climate and water resources expert and Professor Emeritus of Brac University Ainun Nishat said the students, with their knowledge and

enthusiasm, can help the government -- particularly local authorities -- in reducing climate risks and creating awareness.

He urged the children to understand the topic properly and avoid wrong information.

Speaking as the chief guest, Nurul Quadir, additional secretary to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, assured that they would consider the demands as the government is committed to protect its people from climate risks.

Noted singer Tahsan Rahman Khan, UNDP Climate Change Specialist AKM Mamunur Rashid and Save the Children Director (Humanitarian) Mostak Hussain also spoke at the event.



Several thousand employees of municipalities from across the country yesterday continued demonstrations in front of the Jatiya Press Club, demanding that their salaries be paid from government funds.

PHOTO: STAR

Prime accused in rape case arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday arrested the prime accused in a case filed for raping a woman at Golapganj upazila in Sylhet on July 11.

The arrestee is a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver named Alal Hossain, from the same upazila.

On information, police arrested him in Chiknagul area of Jaintiapur upazila, Mijanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Golapganj Police Station, said.

According to the case statement, the victim, an NGO worker, was kidnapped by a group of youths and raped on July 11.

They left the victim in

Konarchar Bazar area on July 12 night. Locals, along with family members, took her to police and then to hospital.

The victim filed a case with Golapganj Police Station, accusing Alal and two unknown men.

On Saturday, locals blocked Sylhet-Zakiganj road for an hour -- demanding immediate arrest of the accused and questioning police's silence over the issue.

Following the protest, Sylhet District Police closed Sub-inspector Tapan Kumar of the police station and assured locals that the accused would be arrested soon.

Severed body of woman found in Savar landfill

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police yesterday recovered the body of an unidentified young woman -- severed in six parts -- from a landfill at Boliarpur area in Savar near Dhaka-Aricha Highway.

Locals noticed the decapitated body wrapped in polythene inside Amin Bazar landfill and informed police around 10am, said Saiful Islam, inspector (investigation) of Savar Police Station.

Police first recovered the torso, said Saiful, adding that after searching nearby, her severed head and limbs were found.

The body was sent to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital for autopsy. Filing of a case was underway, Saiful said, adding they were trying to identify the victim.

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