



Every season paints its own beauty on Tanguar Haor. Stretching to the horizon, this wetland is full of diverse wildlife and hosts a variety of migratory birds. But this bewitchingly beautiful place needs protection too -- from poachers, felling of trees, loss of forage and biodiversity, and climatic change. With that in mind, locals have started planting trees on the embankment. Their target is to plant at least 10,000 trees this season. The photos were taken in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



Commuters, transport operators in a fix

Petrol pump owners continue strike in 3 divisions

STAR REPORT

Fuel supply came to a halt in 26 districts of three divisions as petrol pump and tank lorry owners and workers went on an indefinite strike since early hours of yesterday to press home their 15-point demand.

Hundreds of tank lorries were seen stranded at different parts of Khulna, Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions, while vehicular movement was thin due to shortage of fuel.

Transport operators said the situation will worsen, if the strike continues.

Leaders of Bangladesh Petrol Pump o Tank Lorry Malik Shramik Oikya Parishad declared the indefinite strike on Saturday to realise their demands, which include paying 7.5 percent commission on fuel sale, introducing accident insurance of Tk 5 lakh for tank lorry workers, increasing fare of tank lorry and a stop to alleged harassment by law enforcers.

Contacted, Mizanur Rahman Ratan, secretary general of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners' Association, said they will continue the agitation until their demands are met.

"We have a meeting with the officials of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation tomorrow [today] at 11am in Dhaka. We will take further decision following the meeting," he told this newspaper last night.

Our correspondents from different districts reported on the strike:

In Khulna, hundreds of oil tank lorries were seen stranded on roads in Khalishpur, BIDD, Natun Rasta intersection and Daulatpur areas.

Visiting three state-owned oil depot -- Padma, Meghna and Jamuna -- in Khalishpur, it was seen that at least 5,000 lorries were waiting for fuel.

"I tried to load fuel but workers at the depot did not let me," said driver Russel Nabi, who came from Kushtia.

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ATTEMPTED SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN CTG

Three bus workers held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Detectives of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) on Saturday night arrested three transport workers over attempting to sexually harass a female student of Chittagong University in a running bus on November 27.

The arrestees are driver Ehsan Kabir (27), supervisor Ali Abbas (30), and helper Md Faruk Bhutto (32), said police. They all hail from Cox's Bazar.

The three -- employees of an inter-district bus of "Sohag Express" plying Chattogram-Cox's Bazar route -- were arrested from Bahaddarhat Bus Terminal in the city, said Amena Begum, additional commissioner (crime and operation) of CMP, at a press briefing yesterday.

"The student boarded a port city-bound bus from Patiya around 3pm. All except her got off in Shah Amanat Bridge area and Chandgaon Bus Terminal," she said.

"When she tried to get off in Chandgaon, Abbas asked Bhutto to close the door. She then tried to call 999, but they started pushing her," she added.

Asif Mohiuddin, additional deputy commissioner of the detective branch, told The Daily Star, "While scuffling with the bus helper and supervisor, she started shouting for help and kicking the door."

"At one point, they threatened to throw her off the vehicle and opened the door. She acted quickly and jumped out of the bus," said Asif.

The ADC added, "We scrutinised CCTV footage of the bridge's toll area after learning about the incident. We then identified the bus and arrested the three. During primary interrogation, they admitted to the offence."

A case was filed in this connection.

DIPAN MURDER CASE

Widow of slain publisher testifies

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Prosecution witness Razia Rahman, widow of slain publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan, yesterday told a Dhaka court that some unknown militants killed her husband inside the office of Jagriti Prokashani on October 31, 2015.

Razia, also complainant of the case, said, "After murder, militants fled the scene, locking the office door."

When the door was unlocked, Dipan's body was on the floor, she said.

"My father-in-law Abul Quasem Fazlul Huq identified Dipan's body," she added.

After that, officers of Shahbagh Police Station made an inquest report and sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy, Razia said. "On November 2 that year, I filed a case with Shahbagh Police Station in this regard," she added.

Another prosecution witness, Anowar Hossain, also gave his statement before the court.

Judge Md Majibur Rahman of Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal of Dhaka recorded the statements after the defence lawyers cross-examined them.

'Be vocal against adulteration'

President tells Ruet graduates at convocation

UNB, Rajshahi

President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged all, especially students, to raise voice against food adulteration.

"I've visited many countries... But I didn't see any food adulteration there, even not in our neighbouring India and Nepal," he said.

The president said this while addressing the 5th convocation of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) on its campus.

He advised students launch a campaign in this regard to make people aware. He also called upon politicians, teachers and conscious citizens to work together.

Terming technology a tool for development, President Hamid stressed the need for innovation. "You'll have to focus upon innovating time-befitting and suitable technologies," he said.

There is no alternative to creating skilled engineers to meet challenges of the 21st century, he said. "Despite having huge human resources, we cannot move forward up to the expected level as we don't have the desired level of technical and technology-based education," the president said.

Hamid said the government has put special emphasis on technical and technology-based education. Science and technology universities are being set up in different districts and long-term plans

have been undertaken to upgrade those to international standards.

Hamid, also chancellor of the university, said Bangladesh is regarded as a role model of development in terms of socio-economic progress.

"The education system is changing fast. We should put emphasis on pragmatic and practical education," he said.

He said the role of engineers is unique in every field, from infrastructure to industrial, factories, power and telecommunications to marines, information technology, aerospace and research. Engineers are crucial to implement the plan Bangladesh has taken to become a prosperous country by 2041, he added.

Yesterday, 2,586 graduates registered their names in the convocation.

Of them, 597 are from two departments under civil engineering; 1,066 from three departments under electrical and computer engineering, and 853 from four departments under mechanical engineering.

Seventy postgraduates, including nine for PhD, 45 for MSc engineering, 10 for master's in engineering and 10 for MPhil degrees also registered their names.

Director of Virginia Tech Advanced Research Institute, USA Saifur Rahman attended the event as the convocation speaker while Ruet Vice Chancellor Rafiqul Islam Sheikh delivered the welcome address.

FAKE NID FOR ROHINGYAS

2 accused sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A court in Chattogram yesterday sent two accused of the case over national identity (NID) forgery involving Rohingyas to jail after they surrendered before the court on completion of their four-week bail secured from the High Court.

The accused are Shagar Chowdhury and Satya Sundor De, said court sources. The duo were data entry operators of Election Commission (EC) in Dhaka.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) (prosecution) Mohammed Kamruzzaman of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) said the duo surrendered before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Osman Gani, and the court sent them to jail.

Earlier, they secured four weeks' bail from the HC in connection with the case, he added.

Investigators of Counter Terrorism (CT) of CMP said Shagar and Satya had been absconding since the case was filed with Kotwali Police Station on September 17. They have passwords of different servers of EC, and using the passwords they entered dubious data of Rohingyas into the server and printed the cards, added CT officials who investigated the case.

On September 15, ACC found that using official devices, several syndicates provided Bangladeshi NID to Rohingyas through forgery, in exchange of huge sums of money. ACC said several laptops of EC -- directly connected to NID server -- were stolen and EC has no official data about the missing laptops yet.

Police and passport officials said some Rohingyas were making Bangladeshi passports using forged NID cards with the help of some locals and Rohingya brokers.

The Rohingyas were using fake names and addresses while applying for the identification documents.

Barishal locals seek repair of city roads

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Barishal unit of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) yesterday brought out a procession and formed a human chain in front of Ashwini Kumar Hall in the city, demanding resolution of various issues.

Their demands include repairing roads and digging canals in the city, and reduction of holding tax.

Several hundred people -- including students, rickshaw-pullers and cultural activists -- took part in the rally and gave a memorandum to Israil Hossain, CEO of Barishal City Corporation (BCC).

Speakers there said many roads in the city are damaged. The existing canals also need to be dug up for water to flow freely.

Organiser Imran Habib Rumon said they demonstrated in some 25 wards from November 15.

"If our demands are not met within a short time, we will start a more aggressive movement," he added.

NOT PROVIDING CONVICTION ORDER

Rab exec magistrate Sarwoer apologies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the home secretary to provide necessary manpower and logistical support to mobile courts so that those can run smoothly.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order after hearing a writ petition filed by one Md Mizan Miah.

A mobile court of Rapid Action Battalion, led by Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam, sentenced Mizan -- manager of a cattle feed producing factory named Topu Enterprise at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj -- to one year's imprisonment under the Fish Feed and Animal Feed Act 2010 on July 18 this year.

Mizan, who was sent to jail the same day, applied to the office of Narayanganj District Magistrate on July 21 and October 15 for the certified copy of the mobile court's conviction order so that he could appeal to the higher authorities concerned against the conviction and sentence, but he was not given the copy.

During yesterday's hearing, Executive Magistrate Sarwoer Alam appeared before the bench as per its November 18 order and offered unconditional apology for not giving the certified copy to the convict.

Sarwoer Alam told the court that he could not release the certified copy to Mizan on time due to shortage of manpower and logistical support.

The HC bench accepted the apology and passed the order, disposing of the petition.

The same HC bench on October 29 directed the authorities concerned to take steps to ensure that the mobile court releases certified copy of its conviction order in five working days.

Parents of deceased child file complaint against Max Hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family of Jihan Sarwar, who supposedly died because of wrong treatment, lodged a written allegation of negligence and maltreatment for the death of their child to the civil surgeon of Chattogram district.

The written complainant was submitted with civil surgeon's office yesterday.

Mohsena Akther Jhorna, mother of the deceased, claimed that her unwell one-year-old was admitted at Max Hospital on November 17.

"My child was taken to NICU (neonatal intensive care unit) later where we felt helpless due to the inefficiency of nurses and inexperienced staff of the unit," the written statement said.

The medicine administered by doctors was supposed to be given by machine slowly, but the nurse injected it into the baby's body -- leading to his death, she alleged.

Hospital authorities did not let them see the report, driving the parents to think that something was wrong, the statement further said, adding that the file where the treatment history was documented was not made available.

Jhorna sought exemplary punishment for those responsible.

Civil surgeon of Chattogram Sheikh Rabbi said they have formed a three-member committee to look into it.



People queue up in front of a Trading Corporation of Bangladesh truck in Barishal city to buy onions. The onions, imported from Turkey, were being sold at Tk 45 per kg, whereas the same kind were being retailed for Tk 170-180 per kg. The photo was taken yesterday on Fazlul Haque Avenue.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Why no commission yet: HC on house rent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to form a commission to make necessary recommendations for setting a standard of house rent and to appoint a rent controller at ward level.

In the rule, the court also asked the respondents to show cause why Section-15 of the House Rent Control Act, 1991 that describes the method of fixing house rent should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

Cabinet secretary, the prime minister's office secretary, parliament secretariat secretary, law secretary and mayors of two city corporations of Dhaka have been made respondents to the rule, returnable in four weeks.

The HC bench of Justice Refaat Ahmed and Justice Md Shohrawardi came up with the rule following a writ petition filed by rights organisation Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh seeking necessary order.

During the hearing, petitioner's lawyer advocate Manzill Murshid told the HC that if house rent is fixed according to Section 15 of the 1991 law, the rent would be three-four times higher than the standard and tenants will have to allocate most of their income to house rent, which will cause them to suffer.

Therefore, Section-15 of the House Rent Control Act, 1991 is contradictory to the fundamental rights guaranteed by Article 32 of the constitution, he argued, saying that the section is ineffective and needs to be scrapped.