

## Civil society slams councillor's 'attack' on Drik exhibition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil society members have condemned and protested an attack on a photography exhibition on extrajudicial killings organised by Drik Gallery on September 4.

In a statement issued on Sunday, sixty members of civil society also alleged that there was an ill attempt to foil the peaceful event held at the Dhaka University campus on September 4.

"The entire protest programme against crossfire was being streamed live on Facebook. We clearly saw that more than 100 activists of the ruling party led by councillor of ward-26 of Dhaka South City Corporation, Hasibur Rahman Manik, stormed into the programme," read the statement.

At that time, Manik told the protesters that the trial of August 21 grenade attack case has to be carried out first and the trial of other cases should not be done till then, said the statement.

"The ruling party men then started pushing around the rights activists, snatched photos displayed for the exhibit, tried to seize activists' mobile phones and stood in front of the gallery's banner wielding their own placards," it said.

The ruling party men allegedly snatched loudspeakers from the rights activists.

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Bangladeshi expatriates yesterday organised a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding their return to Malaysia and favourable loan schemes to deal with the pandemic. The Malaysian government imposed an entry ban from Monday on citizens of 12 countries, including Bangladesh, which have recorded more than 1,50,000 Covid-19 cases.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## Arrest of 81 migrant workers against law

Say experts, activists on Vietnam returnees

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Eighty-one migrant workers were recently arrested under Section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), in violation of the law and Supreme Court directive, as there is no specific allegation against them, some legal experts and rights activists have observed.

Even a writ petition may be moved before the High Court to challenge the legality of their arrest and seek necessary directives on this issue, a lawyer said.

Syed Sayedul Haque Suman, a Supreme Court lawyer, told The Daily Star that the workers, who returned from Vietnam, were arrested on the sole charge of damaging Bangladesh's image, which is inhuman and violates the law and SC directive.

According to those laws and the directive, a person can be arrested under CrPC's Section 54 only if there is any specific allegation against them, which is not the case here, he said. "I will move a writ petition before the High Court, challenging the legality of the law enforcers' action," he added.

SC lawyer and Ain O Salish Kendra Chairperson ZI Khan Panna told this newspaper that the media should play a vocal role to stop such arrests and make law enforcers aware of relevant laws.

SC lawyer and Dhaka Law Reports Editor Khurshid Alam Khan said if the workers would have committed any offence in Vietnam, they could be tried and punished in that country, not Bangladesh.

Khurshid said according to the Penal Code of Bangladesh, an offender can be tried and punished in Bangladesh if they commit the crime within the country's territory.

However, eminent lawyer Dr Shahdeen Malik said if any Bangladeshi national commits a serious crime in any other country and then returns to Bangladesh, they can be arrested and tried in Bangladesh.

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## VICTIMS OF N'GANJ MOSQUE BLAST

# High Court order on compensation today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court will pass an order today on the writ petition that sought its directive upon authorities of Titas Gas Ltd to give Tk 50 lakh in compensation to each family of victims, who died and suffered injuries from the Narayanganj mosque blast.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam yesterday fixed the date for delivering an order on the petition after concluding hearing on it.

Advocate Taimur Alam Khondker appeared for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Noor Us Sadik represented the state.

Supreme Court lawyer and a resident of Narayanganj Mar-um Khondaker submitted the writ petition as public interest litigation to the HC on Monday seeking its directive.

In the petition, she prayed to the HC to order the government to identify the persons responsible for the negligence in

repairing the gas pipeline which reportedly caused the explosion.

The petitioner requested the HC to order the authorities concerned to regularly check the utility service lines including those of gas, electricity and water across the country and take necessary measures to repair if there is any defect in the lines.

Mar-um Khondaker said officials of Titas Gas have reportedly sought Tk 50,000 from the mosque committee to repair the leak of gas pipeline. Titas did not repair it as its officials were not given the money, she stated in the petition.

Twenty-eight people have so far died and several others suffered injuries from the explosion at Pashchim Talla Baitus Salam Mosque after Esha prayers on Friday.

There has been widespread allegation that the explosion was caused by gas that leaked from underground pipeline and accumulated inside the ground floor of the mosque.

## Petition seeks Ramna Park reopen in 24hr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking its directive on the secretary to the ministry of housing and public works to reopen the Ramna Park in 24 hours.

Md Eunus Ali Akond submitted the petition as public interest litigation to the HC praying to it to issue a rule asking the housing and public works secretary to explain why the closure of Ramna Park should not be declared illegal.

In the petition, the lawyer said the housing and public works secretary has violated people's freedom of movement -- guaranteed by article 36 of the constitution -- through closing Ramna Park.

Citing the writ petition, Akond told The Daily Star that Ramna Park was opened as a public space in the Mughal era.

The government has closed the park in March this year in order to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Locals cannot walk, exercise and run in the park as it is still now closed although all offices and streets have already been reopened, he said.

The petitioner said many diabetic patients who used to walk and exercise in Ramna Park have been seriously ill or passed away.

Akond said the HC may hold hearing on the writ petition today.

## Countrywide chemical metrology service soon

JS also passes two other bills including Gazipur Unnayan Kartripakkha Bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed a bill aimed at forming Bangladesh Reference Institute for Chemical Measurements to provide chemical metrology service across the country.

There will be no need to go abroad for chemical tests after setting up the institute. Rather any other country will be able to test chemicals from Bangladesh.

Science and Technology Affairs Minister Architect Yeafesh Osman placed the Bill titled "The Bangladesh Reference Institute for Chemical Measurements (BRICM)", passed by voice vote.

According to the bill, the institute will facilitate the Designated Reference Institute for Chemical Measurements to smoothly conduct tests of its chemical activities by maintaining the ISO standards.

For chemical measurement, DRICM was

introduced on June 10, 2012 under the Bangladesh Science and Industry Research Council.

With the new law, this old institute will go under the jurisdiction of the Science and Technology Ministry.

Meanwhile, "Bangladesh Engineering Research Council Bill 2020" was passed at Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, which was placed by Yeafesh Osman.

According to the proposed legislature, a 10-member governing body, headed by a chairman, will run the research council. The chairman will also be the chief executive officer.

Besides, there will be a 45-member advisory body, headed by the science and technology minister, for the research council. There will also be a six-member expert panel where internationally reputed Bangladeshis or expatriate Bangladeshis

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## Railway to add 84 trains between Sept 10 and 16

50pc tickets at stations from Saturday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway (BR) is adding 84 more trains, mostly locals and commuter services, to the fleet in between September 10 and 16, as the state-run transport agency is trying to normalise service.

However, BR will continue to operate trains at half capacity, according to a circular signed by Deputy Director (traffic transportation) Khairul Kabir on Monday. The 84 trains will bring the total number of trains in operation to 218 as BR is gradually increasing trains in its fleet, Shariful Islam, senior information officer of the railways ministry, said.

The rest 144 mail and local trains would resume operation gradually, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The authorities have started selling of all tickets of local, mail and commuter trains from stations from September 5. The authorities could not bring those trains under online ticket selling system.

In another circular issued Monday, BR said it will start selling 50 percent tickets of intercity trains from the stations from September 12 while other 50 percent tickets would be sold out through online.

After resumption of train services, BR has been selling all tickets of intercity trains through online and a mobile app.

Out of 84 trains, 28 will resume operation from Thursday while 20 will resume operation on September 13 and the rest on September 16, according to the circular.

BR started resuming operation of rail services from May 31, more than two months after the authority suspended operation of passenger trains on March 24 to curb the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

## ABDUCTED FROM DU CAMPUS

# 9-year-old flower seller rescued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine year-old Zinia, who used to sell flowers in Dhaka University's TSC area and was abducted a week ago from the campus, was rescued in Narayanganj on Sunday night.

A team of detectives also detained a woman named Lopa Talukder during a drive at Amtola, said Mahbub Alam, joint commissioner of Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Mishu Biswas, additional deputy Commissioner of Raman Division, said the woman abducted the girl with ill motives. She lured the child with money, the ADC said.

Zinia's mother Senura Begum earlier told media that she last saw her daughter with two unidentified women near Suhrawardy Udyan on September 1.

Finding her nowhere, she later filed a general diary with Shahbagh Police Station.

Zinia lives with her mother and two siblings in TSC area. She sells flowers on the campus. Many students as well as campus-based street vendors know her.



Homeless people collect bricks from here and there, and break them under a makeshift shed beside this footpath near Dhaka Medical College Hospital. This venture takes up quite a bit of space on the road, causing some trouble for vehicles and passers-by.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



At Savar's Ashula-Baipail Road, mini-trucks are parked indiscriminately by the side, taking up around a quarter of the road. This regularly causes traffic congestions and tailbacks that could be easily avoided if there were more space on the road for commuting vehicles. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## DEATH OF ELEPHANTS

# Writ petition to form probe body rejected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summarily rejected a writ petition that sought its directive upon the government to form a high-standing committee to conduct an inquiry into the deaths of 84 wild elephants in Chattogram region in the last 19 years.

The bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Md Khairul Alam passed the rejection order as the petitioner did not serve any demand of justice (legal) notice on the authorities concerned of the government for necessary action to this effect, Deputy Attorney General Noor Us Sadik told The Daily Star.

He said the authorities are duty bound to protect the wild animals as per section-36 of the Wild Animals Protection Act. The petitioner could have sought remedy under this law, DAG Noor Us Sadik added.

Supreme Court lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhowmick on August 24 submitted the petition as public interest litigation to the HC, also challenging the "negligence" of the authorities concerned to protect the wild elephants from unnatural deaths in Chattogram forest region.

In the petition, he said the officials concerned of the forest department are constitutionally bound to protect the wild elephants but they failed to comply with the constitution as 84 elephants have reportedly died in last 19 years in Chattogram.

Manoj told The Daily Star that he filed the writ petition based on a report published in The Daily Star on August 23 in this regard.

The report said, "According to forest department data, 106 elephants died in the Chattogram Forest Circle -- which includes Cox's Bazar, parts of Bandarban, Chattogram city, and Rangamati -- in the last 19 years.

During this period, forest departments across this region filed only two cases and 74 general diaries in relation to elephant deaths.

## Khalidi's bail challenged at SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging a High Court order that granted anticipatory bail to Toufique Imrose Khalidi, editor-in-chief of online news portal bdnews24.com, in a corruption case.

In the petition, the ACC prayed to the apex court to stay the HC order of bail to Khalidi, saying that there are specific allegations against him of committing corruption, ACC's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the ACC filed the stay petition with the SC on August 27. The chamber judge of the Appellate Division might hold hearing on the ACC's stay petition tomorrow, the ACC lawyer added.

On August 26, the HC granted anticipatory bail to Khalidi for eight weeks in the corruption case.

The bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order after hearing a bail petition filed by Khalidi. His lawyer Mahbub Shafiq told The Daily Star that the HC granted bail to his client considering the argument that he has not committed any corruption.

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