

3 CASES FILED MONDAY

Shahadat, 15 Ctg
BNP men sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Chattogram court yesterday sent BNP's city unit convener Dr Shahadat Hossain and 15 other BNP leaders and activists to jail in three cases filed against them with Chawkbazar and Kotwali police stations on Monday.

The court of metropolitan magistrate Sarwar-e-Jahan sent the leaders and activists to jail after they were produced before the court at around 4:30pm, said Assistant Commissioner (AC) (prosecution) Kazi Shahabuddin Ahmed of CMP.

"Police produced Dr Shahadat Hossain before the court seeking 10-day remand prayer in the extortion case filed with Chawkbazar police station while the court sent him to jail fixing Wednesday for remand hearing," said the AC.

Apart from that, Kotwali police pleaded before the court to show Shahadat arrested in two cases filed over vandalising a traffic box and attacking police during a demonstration rally in Kazir Dewri area on Monday, and sought seven-day remand of 15 BNP leaders and activists; the court also fixed Wednesday for hearing, he added.

Earlier, police filed a case with Kotwali Police Station accusing Dr Shahadat and 56 others BNP leaders and 60 unnamed persons over clash with police.

Shahadat, who was BNP's mayoral candidate in January's Chattogram City Corporation polls, was arrested on Monday night in connection with an extortion case.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN CHATTOGRAM

Little heed to health
guidelines despite
rise in infections

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Despite the sharp rise in Covid-19 infections in Chattogram, people remain apathetic towards health and safety guidelines.

According to Chattogram Civil Surgeon's Office, the rate of detecting positive cases of Covid-19 was at 4 percent on March 7. On the day, 63 out of 1607 samples were tested positive.

However, the number of positive cases kept increasing, and last Monday, 11.40 percent of all samples were tested positive for Covid-19 (212 out of 1,859 samples).

The increasing rate of coronavirus infections should be alarming, but the crowds in different areas of the city including Agrabad, Chawkbazar, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Jamal Khan, New Market and Anderkilla paint a contradicting picture.

Upon visits in these areas, this correspondent found that at least one-third of people gathered there do not wear face masks. Many people had masks, but wore them in the incorrect way, exposing their mouth and nose.

Public transportation was full, with no room for social distancing. Chittagong University student Tanmoy Chowdhury, said, "I am a regular commuter in the city and I always wear a mask when I'm outside. But every day I see that others are not doing the same, so my safety is also compromised despite me following the health guidelines."

"I would request the administration to go for tough action," he said.

Meanwhile, Chattogram Civil Surgeon Dr Sheikh Fazle Rabbi tested positive for Covid-19 yesterday. He received vaccine on February 7, said Dr Hasan Shahriar Kabir, director (Chattogram division) of Directorate General of Health Services.

Amid such dire circumstances, health experts opine that there is no alternative to following health and safety guidelines now.

"I have tested Dr Rabbi's antibody for research purpose. I found that no antibody has been developed against Covid-19 in his body," said Dr Abdur Rob, senior consultant of medicine and head of Covid-19 ward at Chattogram General Hospital.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

(Clockwise from top) A number of floating people have settled in at the park with their families, much to the annoyance of regular parkgoers. Fruit vendors and other hawkers also take up walkways inside it. Old structures, like this obelisk, appear to not have been cleaned for a long time. The photos were taken recently.

BAHADUR SHAH PARK IN CAPITAL

Renovation gone to waste?

Taken over by floating people, hawkers just a year after reopening

HASAN MEER

"Can we go now?" the disappointment was evident in Arman's voice.

His father, Rashidul Hasan tried one last time. "Look, this obelisk is over 100 years old," the Laxmibazar resident told his 10-year-old son.

The father and son were visiting Bahadur Shah Park in Old Dhaka on a Friday afternoon recently.

Curious, Arman went a bit closer to take a look but soon returned to his father, as a group of homeless people -- who have made the premises their home -- occupied it.

By the time this correspondent caught up with Rashidul, he had also given up on finding a place for his son to play.

"I couldn't even find a spot to sit as most are occupied by vendors or floating people," said the private job holder.

Only a year after the park was renovated and freshly opened by Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), the park is no longer a safe and fun place for citizens.

"We don't have that many open places in Old Dhaka. When the authorities renovated and reopened the park, we were elated. But the present situation is not better than what this park used to be. The authorities should do something about it," he told this correspondent.

The weekdays at Bahadur Shah Park were not any better either, which became obvious during multiple visits by our correspondents over the last two weeks.

The park remains occupied by floating people and vendors most of the time while people continue to litter the premises.

Plastic bottles, polythene bags, peanut shells, cigarette stubs, torn

cloths and papers were either seen piled up in corners or scattered everywhere.

"How can I bring my children here?" said Kamrun Nahar, a local. "Addicts and the homeless have ruined the atmosphere and no one seems to care," she added.

Meanwhile, a group of youngsters were seen throwing plastic cups in the park after drinking tea from a vendor. When approached, they appeared nonchalant about it.

At the same time, some of the floating population became hostile towards this correspondent upon seeing him talking to people and taking pictures.

'MANPOWER SHORTAGE'

About the situation, Abul Hossain, a staffer of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) at the park, said, "Three of us work in shifts to look after the park. But it's not enough."

His co-worker Joynal echoed him. "To tell you the truth, we are also scared of the floating population inside the park. Often times, many of them become violent when we try to evict them," he said.

Aklima Begum, a worker at the public toilet on the premises, said, "Addicts, peddlers and the homeless often make the place dirty. They urinate here and there and use the park whichever way they want."

Even police seemed rather indifferent regarding the persisting situation. Asked, some of them, wishing anonymity, said they try their best to avert any untoward situation.

HISTORY OF THE PARK

Enriched with wonderful architectural features, the park is located in Laxmibazar, near Jagannath University.

During the first half of the 19th century, Nawab Khwaja Abdul Ghani, the first Nawab of Dhaka recognised by the British rulers, took the initiative to establish it.

History says, from the time of its construction till 1957, the park was known as "Victoria Park", named after Queen Victoria. In 1957, the park was renamed after the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II.

In 1857, during the Sepoy Mutiny against colonial rulers, English soldiers executed many mutineers by hanging them from different trees of the place.

A monument in memory of the sepoys has also been erected at the park.

There are two entrances and two memorials (the tallest one is situated at the eastern side, in memory of the martyred sepoys and the other one is Khawja Hafijullah obelisk) at the park.

There is also a small obelisk signifying the throne of Queen Victoria.

But over the years, due to lack of proper maintenance, the former ambience of Bahadur Shah Park gradually lost its magnificence.

Most of the sculptures as well as the overall environment were in decrepit condition. The park became a gathering place for anti-social activities.

RENOVATION WORK

After a year-long renovation work, this historic park reopened in March last year with an aim to provide a green respite for Old Dhaka residents.

The work was done under a "park modernisation project" of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) with a cost of around Tk 6 crore, according to city officials.

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New political party
'Noitik Samaj' emergesConvener AMSA Amin says they want to
create principled leadership in politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maj Gen (ret'd) AMSA Amin yesterday floated a new political party called "Noitik Samaj".

Amin, convener of the party, held a press conference at Jatiya Press Club to announce this. He said he launched the party to create principled leadership and moral values in politics.

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain spoke at the press conference as chief guest through virtual platform.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder and trustee Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University, among others, addressed the programme.

Several top leaders of the new party -- who were present on the

occasion -- were retired army personnel.

In recent months, a number of new political parties were also formed.

AMSA Amin is a politician from Kurigram and a former ambassador. He retired from the army and joined the Awami League back in 2001.

In 2003, he was elected president of AL Kurigram district committee. He was defeated in the 2001 national elections from Kurigram-2 with AL nomination. Later, he joined Gonoforum in 2018.

He also lost the 2018 polls from the constituency under the banner of Jatiya Oikya Jote

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Ctg man accused of
raping sister-in-law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A student of a government college in Chattogram city has filed a case against her brother-in-law and sister on charge of rape, blackmail and forceful abortion.

The victim hails from Sandwip upazila, and she filed the case on March 28 with Sandwip Police Station. Police sent her to Chattogram Medical College Hospital's one-stop crisis centre for medical tests.

There are three accused in the case -- Md Atikur Rahman (50), his wife Kamrun Nahar (38), and the director of a private hospital in the city's Golpohar area.

According to the case statement obtained by this correspondent, the victim said that since 2011, she had been staying with her sister Kamrun Nahar and brother-in-law Md Atikur Rahman in the city because she went to school there.

As her parents were unable to afford education in the city, she was dependent on her sister and brother-in-law to continue her studies.

Quoting the case statement, Officer-in-Charge (OC) Md Bashir Uddin Khan

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Dhaka was noticeably empty on the government holiday for Shab-e-Barat yesterday, and the leaves were noticeably greener. New leaves of spring are bringing life back to the city after a smoggy winter. This photo was taken at Dhaka University campus.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

CJ reconstitutes
jurisdictions of
17 HC benches

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain has reconstituted jurisdictions of 17 High Court benches, as both the Appellate and High Court divisions of the Supreme Court will reopen today after a 12-day vacation.

A notification was issued to this effect on Monday. Among the 17 benches, 15 are two-member (division) benches and two are one-member (single bench).

A total of 52 HC benches will hear and dispose of the cases, SC sources said.

Both the Appellate and HC divisions of the SC went on an annual vacation on March 19.

Ninth-grader stabbed
dead, two injured by
teen gang in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teenage boy was stabbed dead and at least two were injured after a teen gang attacked them at the capital's Sutrapur area on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Ananta (14), a ninth-grader at a local school. He bore stab marks on his body.

The injured -- Saju and Sohel -- were receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The incident happened at Mill Barrack Lalkuthi area of Sutrapur around 11:30pm.

A few days ago, Ananta and his friends had an altercation with a teen gang sheltered by criminals, said Saju.

As Ananta and his friends went to the spot, the gang attacked them. At one stage, the gang members stabbed them indiscriminately, he told reporters at DMCH.

They were rushed to DMCH, where doctors declared Ananta dead, said SI Abdul Khan of DMCH Police Outpost. Abdur Rahman, a sub-inspector at Sutrapur Police Station, said they have so far arrested a 13-year-old in connection with the incident.


Rain likely
across country

BSS, Dhaka


Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) yesterday forecast rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind at some places of the country in the next 24 hours.

"Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Sylhet division and at one or two places over Dhaka, Mymensingh, Rangpur and Chattogram divisions with hails at isolated places," said a bulletin of Met office.

"Weather may remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country," the bulletin said.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ সড়ক পরিবহন কর্তৃপক্ষ (বিআরটিএ)



গণপরিবহনে স্বাস্থ্যবিধি প্রতিপালন সংক্রান্ত জরুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

করোনা ভাইরাস (কোভিড-১৯) সংক্রমণ রোধে গণপরিবহনে নিম্নোক্ত স্বাস্থ্যবিধি ও শর্তাদি প্রতিপালন করার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে সর্বশেষ অনুরোধ করা হলোঃ

- ধারণ ক্ষমতার ৫০ ভাগের অধিক যাত্রী পরিবহন করা যাবে না;
- বিদ্যমান ভাড়ার অতিরিক্ত ৬০% এর বেশী ভাড়া নেওয়া যাবে না;
- সংক্রমণের উচ্চ ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ এলাকাসহ আন্তঃজেলা যান চলাচল সীমিত করতে হবে; প্রয়োজনে বন্ধ রাখতে হবে;
- গণপরিবহনে যাত্রী, চালক, সুপারভাইজার/কন্ডাক্টর, হেল্পার এবং টিকেট বিক্রয় কেন্দ্রের দায়িত্বে নিয়োজিত ব্যক্তিগণের মাস্ক পরিধান/ব্যবহার নিশ্চিত করতে হবে; তাদের হাত ধোয়ার জন্য পর্যাপ্ত সাবান-পানি/হ্যান্ড সেনিটাইজারের ব্যবস্থা রাখতে হবে;
- যাত্রার শুরু ও শেষে যানবাহন পরিষ্কার-পরিচ্ছন্নসহ জীবাণুনাশক দিয়ে জীবাণুমুক্ত করতে হবে;
- বাসে উঠার ও নামার ক্ষেত্রে সামাজিক দূরত্ব বজায় রাখতে হবে;
- গণপরিবহনের জন্য প্রয়োজ্য অন্যান্য স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে চলতে হবে;
- এ নির্দেশনা ৩১ মার্চ, ২০২১ হতে পরবর্তী নির্দেশ না দেয়া পর্যন্ত (আপাততঃ ০২ (দুই) সপ্তাহের জন্য) বলবৎ থাকবে।

বিআরটিএ

জিডি-৬৪৭