

3 held for pushing teacher off moving bus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-7) yesterday detained three transport workers over pushing a primary-school teacher off a moving bus and running the vehicle over him, leaving him critically injured, in port city's Station Road area last Saturday.

The arrestees were identified as Mohammad Hossen (25), Mohammad Liton (35) and a 13-year-old helper.

Liton is the driver and Hossen the conductor of a bus of Showrav Paribahan in the city.

Addressing a press briefing at Chandgaon camp yesterday, Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col MA Yusuf said Hossen had locked into an altercation with the teacher, Rahmat Ullah, over fare. At one point, they harassed and manhandled Rahmat.

"Later, they pushed him off the running bus and ran the vehicle over him, leaving him critically injured," the official said.

Rahmat, who teaches at Habibullah Govt Primary School at Panchlaish, was undergoing treatment at a private hospital.



Pahartali Baddhyabhumhi, the largest mass killing ground in Chattogram during the Liberation War in 1971, lies in negligence. During the tenure of BNP-Jamaat, University of Science and Technology Chattogram (USTC) constructed a building at the site. In March 2014, the SC ordered that the 1.75 acres of land of immense historical value be acquired from USTC and preserved. However, no such initiative has been taken over the last seven years.

PHOTO: STAR

PRESERVATION OF PAHARTALI BADDHYABHUMI
SC verdict yet to be effective after 7yrs

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Ctg

Right in the heart of the port city stands Pahartali Baddhyabhumhi, the largest mass killing ground in Chattogram -- on 1.75 acres of land.

To preserve this site of immense historical value, the Supreme Court's Appellate Division passed an order seven and a half years ago. However, no effective initiative has been taken regarding this.

In March 2014, the SC ordered to acquire and preserve the Baddhyabhumhi after hearing a petition of eight prominent citizens of the country, according to Manzill Murshid, their lawyer.

One of the petitioners, Prof Muntassir Mamoon, said, "We have grown old trying to realise our demand. We are no business mafia, and we have no muscle power. Even section officers don't pay heed to us."

"I don't think they care about the Supreme Court's judgment. They are employees of the republic, but now it seems like they run the country. Even if the verdicts of most of the petitions people's favour, they will not be effective if there is no monitoring cell in the High Court," he added.

Rashed Hasan, a cultural activist in Chattogram, said, "Late Dr Gazi Saleh Uddin, who was a professor of Chittagong University, even received death threats on multiple occasions as he protested to save the Baddhyabhumhi."

In his book "Pramanyo Dalil Muktijodde Chattogram", Dr Saleh Uddin mentioned that more than 5,000 people were killed there. "It is very unfortunate that despite the Supreme Court direction, the implementation is being delayed for so many years. The departments or individuals responsible for the delay should be brought under accountability," said Rashed.

"In 2004, the then government formed by BNP-Jamaat alliance built a memorial in another place instead of the actual Baddhyabhumhi site. Later, University of Science and Technology Chattogram constructed a building at the site," said Prof ABM Abu Noman of CU. "The Appellate Division ordered to preserve the Baddhyabhumhi after acquiring the land from USTC in 2014. We have been demanding its preservation for a long time," he added.

Contacted yesterday, Prof Md Jahangir Alam, vice chancellor of USTC, said they bought 1.73 acres of land in the area in 2001. "We donated 20 decimals of the land, where a monument was built to mark the killing site."

He declined to comment further on the issue or the SC order.

Regarding the land acquisition, assistant commissioner Ehsan Murad of Chattogram district administration, said, "We have sent a letter to the Liberation War ministry asking for allocation of around Tk 6.5 crore for acquisition and preservation of Pahartali Baddhyabhumhi."

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Laws need reforms, implementation

Say speakers on ending gender-based violence at BMP event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although there are various laws in the country to prevent violence against women, questions remain as to what extent these laws can provide justice to the victims, said speakers at an event yesterday.

Existing laws, including the Domestic Violence Protection and Prevention Act 2010 and rape laws, need to be reformed to ensure justice for the victims of gender-based violence, they argued.

The event was organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at the capital's Shegunbagicha, as part of the organisation's 16 Days of Activism campaign.

"Despite various initiatives taken by the government and non-government organisations to combat gender-based violence, the incidents are ever increasing. There are still many obstacles towards justice," said BMP general secretary Maleka Banu.

The speakers also called to repeal section 155 (4) of the Evidence Act, which will shift the burden of proof to the perpetrators, and take necessary initiatives to publicise and implement judgments and directives of the Supreme Court.

According to a few studies, victims are yet to know the laws properly. Lawyers and prosecution teams need to be more active in this regard, while police stations need to be more women-friendly to deal with incidents of rape and sexual violence, the speakers recommended.

While addressing the event as chief guest, MD Shahiduzzaman Sarkar, chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, said, "There is dissatisfaction with the justice system -- but we need to rely on many things before finalising a verdict."

"If a chain is weakened intentionally or unintentionally during the

Despite various initiatives taken by the government and NGOs to combat gender-based violence, the incidents are ever increasing. There are still many obstacles towards justice.

BMP GENERAL SECRETARY
MALEKA BANU

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A day of gridlock and suffering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The student movement for safe roads, which escalated after the death of SSC candidate Mainuddin Islam on Monday night, caused gridlocks and long tailbacks in some major parts of the capital yesterday.

Thousands of students from various institutions blocked roads in Rampura, Motijheel, Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi, Science Lab and Banani areas from 10:30am.

As roads leading to the protest spots were blocked with traffic, many commuters had to walk to their destinations. However, ambulances and other emergency medical vehicles were allowed to pass through.

Road blockades in Rampura and Dhanmondi created major traffic jams, as movement of vehicles was halted for hours. The blockade also triggered huge traffic gridlocks in Rampura, Malibagh, Mouchak and adjacent areas.

The students allowed private vehicles to pass through a lane, after checking driving licences. No bus was allowed to pass.

Rasel Ahmed, who was going to Malibagh from Natun Bazar by bus, said the bus got stuck at Badda. After a long wait, he decided to reach his office on foot.

Azmal Ali, a trader from Gazipur, said he came to Malibagh in the morning, but struggled to find a vehicle to go home around 2:30pm.

Auto-rickshaw and motorbike drivers refused to go to some places,



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Finding no vehicles, commuters were seen going to their homes and workplaces on foot, amid long tailbacks and gridlocks in major roads of the capital yesterday. This photo was taken from Mirpur Road.

fearing jams and other hassles.

Shirin Akhter, who was waiting for a vehicle for half an hour at Rampura's Hatirjheel intersection in the afternoon, said she started walking to Banani after finding no vehicle.

Rampura Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Rafiqul Islam said police were deployed to control the situation.

The agitating students said that they would continue their protest

until their nine-point demand is met.

The protests for safe roads and half fares have been continuing for several days. Amid the demonstrations, Nayeem Hasan, a student of Notre Dame College, was rammed and killed by a Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) garbage truck, which was driven by a cleaner, on November 24, and Mainuddin Islam was crushed to death under a bus.



COURT CORNER

Papia, husband indicted in graft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against Jubo Mohila League's expelled leader Shamima Nur Papia and her husband Mofizur Rahman Sumon in a case filed over amassing about Tk 6.24 crore illegally.

Judge Muhammad Ali Hussain read out the charges to them and dismissed petitions submitted for discharging the couple and fixed December 22 for starting the trial.

Charge framing hearing against Mohtesam Dec 12

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set December 12 for hearing on charge framing against 10 people, including Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar -- brother of former AL minister Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain -- in a case over laundering Tk 2,000 crore.

Former GS of Faridpur town AL Sajjad Hossain alias Barkat and his brother, former president of Faridpur Press Club, Imtiaz Hasan alias Rubel, are among the accused.

HC hands over UPDF member to cops in laundering case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An HC bench yesterday handed over UPDF member, Shankadas Barua, to police after he surrendered before it for anticipatory bail in Tk 1.3 crore money laundering case. HC asked Shahbagh police to arrest Shankadas, member of Jana Sanghati Samity, over having connection with militancy.

DU centenary celebrations start today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The opening ceremony of the celebrations for Dhaka University's (DU) centenary and the golden jubilee of the independence of the country will be held today at the central playground of the university.

President Md Abdul Hamid, also chancellor of the university, will inaugurate the festival as chief guest.

Prime Minister of Bhutan Lottay Tshering, also a DU alumnus, will deliver a virtual greeting speech at the opening ceremony.

Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury will address the opening ceremony as guest of honour and vice-chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman will preside over the opening ceremony.

Although the university's golden jubilee was on July 1, 2021, the celebrations were postponed as a safety measure against coronavirus.

Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni will speak

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PHOTO: ASIFUR RAHMAN

Dhaka University is all set to celebrate its centenary starting from today. As part of the two-week-long festivity, the campus is adorned with lights and colours as seen in this picture taken in front of Curzon Hall yesterday night.

RAIL STATION BOOK STORES

Tales of journeys bygone



PHOTO: STAR

The two bookshops at the capital's Kamalapur Rail Station barely get any customers nowadays, but they're still trying to keep the tradition alive.

DIPAN NANDY

There's this historical relationship between train travel and literature. For a journey that requires long hours of sitting still, travellers had always found companions in books. Until, of course, smartphones and the internet arrived.

Rail travel is a much romanticised idea in Bangladesh. From Rabindranath Tagore to Nirmalendu Goon, numerous poets wrote countless poems about this voyage. In fact, one can even find a few dramas and films that are solely based on train rides.

Since the inception of trains in the subcontinent, rail stations became a great host of bookstores. It was a

natural fit. Travellers could spend their waiting times there, while books bought from the stores could keep them occupied during the long hours inside iron compartments.

But with the passage of time, these bookshops now find themselves in a quagmire.

At Kamalapur Rail Station, the country's main station, thousands upon thousands of people can be seen every day, but almost none of them can be found at its two bookstores -- Camelot Book Stall and Srijani.

"We started our journey back in the '30s. The first Camelot Book Stall was set up at Phulbaria Station," said owner

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