

SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

Probe report delayed for 77th time

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to submit by February 3 the probe report of a case filed over the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

With yesterday's date, the investigation officer has so far taken 77 dates to complete the investigation.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Abu Sayeed passed the order after Rab's Additional Superintendent Khondoker Shafiqul Alam, also the case's IO, failed to submit the report yesterday.

On November 11 last year, the High Court expressed disappointment at the lack of significant progress in the investigation into the sensational Sagar-Runi murder case.

Sagar, news editor at private TV channel Maasranga, and his wife Runi, a senior reporter at ATN Bangla, were killed in the early hours of February

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With the clear waters of Surma reflecting an early morning sky, Rostom Mia appears to have rowed his boat-full of winter vegetables through the clouds. The 55-year-old farmer arrived at Tuberbazar Kheya Ghat at Sylhet Sadar Upazila to sell radish, cauliflower, tomato, gourd and red spinach to wholesale buyers last weekend. Due to periods of drought and water shortage, his farmlands didn't yield the expected amount of vegetables, but he is optimistic about earning at least Tk 65,000 in profit this year. Around 500 farmers like Rostom trade at this bazaar every day.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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BATTLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Regional water sharing crucial

Speakers tell webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With climate change looming as an ever-present threat, regional cooperation in water and resource-sharing is even more crucial, said speakers at a virtual discussion yesterday.

Titled "Water and Climate Change: Fostering Regional Cooperation and Sharing", the session was organised by The Daily Star, Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA).

"The Green Climate Fund was supposed to raise USD 100 billion per year by 2020, but only USD 18 billion has been raised over the last 8 years. There is a gap between the commitment and the funding," said M Zakir Hossain Khan, senior programme manager (climate finance governance) at Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a fund established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to combat the effects of climate change.

"For Bangladesh, we need USD 40 billion up until 2030 for mitigation of climate change and adaptation. Private investment is nearly zero for adaptation projects, and adaptation projects receive the least funds. For climate vulnerable countries, the climate debt will be huge," he added.

"Only six percent of the overall budget of the Green Climate Fund has been disbursed. This is the reality of the fund. In terms of the rapid response to the disaster in countries like ours they are not at all effective," stated Zakir.

"The National Adaptation Plan is going on. The Green Climate Fund pledged USD 2.55 million for the formation

RU teachers demand removal of VC, admin

RU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of Rajshahi University (RU) demanded immediate implementation of recent government orders and prompt removal of the current university administration for corruption and irregularities that were proved in a UGC probe.

Around 70 teachers under the anti-corruption teachers' faction of Progressive Teachers' Alliance formed a human chain in front of the university senate building with this demand. They were seen with black flags as a symbolic rejection of the Vice Chancellor Professor M Abdus Sobhan and other administration officials.

Speaking at the programme, Sultan Ul Islam of geology and mining department said, "The UGC probe found evidence of the VC's corruption after we brought allegations against the administration. Following the probe report, the Education

Ministry sent some 12 different orders to implement, including registrar's removal. But the VC did not take any action yet. This has proved his moral turpitude. But he is still performing duty as VC. So we want his removal as well as other officials."

Prof Akram Ullah of political science said, "The VC did not step down yet and he is still violating government's order. So we are displaying black flag as a symbol of our refusal and condemnation of this administration. We demand the government to remove him."

During the demonstration, a group of people had snatched the protesting teachers' speaker around 10:30am. Prof Shafiqunabe Samadi of Bangla department said, some outsiders that are following the administration's orders tried to hamper the peaceful demonstration. "We will go for tougher movement if this continues," he said.

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Two more cases against Shahed

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Regent Group Chairman Mohammad Shahed was recently charged with fraud and drug cases filed with Uttara Paschim Police Station in July this year.

The first case was filed against Shahed and four others on July 17 for misappropriating Tk 31,43,500 from a businessman.

The other case was filed against Shahed on July 19 for possessing five bottles of foreign liquor and 10 bottles of phensidy.

Md Ijaz Uddin, an inspector of Criminal Investigation Department of police and also the case's investigation officer, on December 27 submitted the charge sheet against Shahed and four others in a fraud case.

The other accused are: Regent Group Managing Director Masud Parvez, Kazi Robiul Islam, director (Finance) of Regent KCS Ltd, Amit Banik, manager (operation) of KCS Ltd, and Saiful Islam Saikot, company secretary of Regent Group.

Of them, Shahed and three others are now in jail, while Saikot is absconding.

The IO appealed to the court to issue an arrest warrant against Saikot as he was shown fugitive in the charge sheet.

Saif wins bragging rights of Star GENIUS

SHOUT DESK

A three-month journey to find the first ever Daily Star GENIUS powered by Walton Smart Fridge came to an end last Monday, when Saif Al Imam Shota, from Scholastica, Uttara, found himself at the top of the leaderboard at the finishing line of the final.

Students from 27 schools from across the country participated in a game of knowledge and trivia, and after 12 gruelling weeks, only three participants remained. The final was worth the wait, however, as Shota of Scholastica; Sumaiya Mahmud of International Hope School Bangladesh, Chattogram, and Sameer Zia Chowdhury of BAF Shaheen English Medium School put on a stellar show, answering difficult questions encompassing many fields to prove themselves as true geniuses.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, inaugurated the final with words of advice and encouragement directed at all participants, as well as the young audience. He focused on the need to love one's country, and using one's genius to serve public interests.

The quizzing kicked off with a bizarre turn of events as none of the contestants were able to correctly answer any of the first two questions. But usual service soon resumed, as record holding favourite from the previous rounds, Sumaiya, took an early lead. Sameer fell behind as his nerves

took over. In the middle, however, was Shota with his rock-solid determination as he stayed within touching distance of the top spot at every interval. The difference in points between leader and chaser fluctuated between 100 and 200 points, meaning the game could change at any time given two incorrect answers at the top.

After 40 questions, in the Rapid Fire round, it looked as though Sumaiya would hold on to her impressive lead. But Sumaiya had a bad ending to her journey, while Shota cashed in, and it came as a great surprise when the final leaderboard showed Saif Al Imam Shota at the top with 2866 points. The game was extremely close, as evidenced by Sumaiya Mahmud's haul of 2818 points. Sameer Zia pulled back from his nervous start as well to end up with a respectable 1996 points.

The winner was revealed in the presence of Firoj Alam, executive director, Marketing & Communication, Walton Group, who once again expressed praise for the level of knowledge among the young ones fighting it out.

This brought an end to the first series of The Daily Star GENIUS, powered by Walton Smart Fridge, the country's first-ever and biggest online inter-school quiz competition. It was an initiative of SHOUT, the youth supplement of The Daily Star.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Students under 11 can apply for sixth grade admission: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared way for the students under 11 years to apply for admission to class six in government high schools across the country.

In response to a writ petition, the court stayed the effectiveness of a government circular that imposed a condition that the students under 11 years cannot apply for admission to class six in public high schools.

It also issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why the circular should not be declared illegal. The stay order will continue till disposal of the rule.

At the same time, the HC directed the authorities concerned of the government to extend the time for submitting applications for admission through online for seven working days, as many students could not submit the applications due to internet and server problems.

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3.26 lakh returned home in Apr-Nov

RMRRU report says monthly average of migrants returning home increased by 4 times in last 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The average monthly return of migrant workers increased by four times in the last three months than what was in previous five months, Refugee and Migrant Movements Research Unit (RMRRU) said yesterday.

Between April 1 and August 27, some 85,790 migrant workers returned home from 26 countries, RMRRU said, citing government data.

The number of returnees increased to a little over 3.26 lakh as of November 30, it said.

RMRRU shared the data while unveiling its report "Pattern and Trends of Labour Migration 2020: Achievements and Challenges" during a virtual press conference.

Alongside the coronavirus pandemic, fall in global oil price, and job loss in tourism, services, and construction sectors in the Gulf countries were key reasons behind workers' return, it said.

RMRRU called upon the authorities concerned

to put pressure on multilateral organisations for issuing an embargo on forced deportation of workers by host countries amid crisis period.

Besides, demand should be raised in multilateral forums to implement a mandatory "migrant protection policy" during crisis time in both receiving and sending countries. Natural disaster, economic recession and health crisis could be included in the policy, it said.

Presenting the report, RMRRU Founding Chair Prof Tasneem Siddiqui said migrant workers faced multi-dimensional challenges amid the pandemic.

"From this year's review, we could see how rights violation that migrant workers have been facing deepened further during a crisis," she added.

Amid the pandemic, many workers got stranded after coming home on holiday, many despite completing all procedure could not fly abroad, while migrant workers suffered most due to virus infection in host countries, she said.

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Sabrina denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday refused to grant bail to JKG Healthcare's Chairperson Dr Sabrina Sharmin Hossain in a case filed for issuing fake Covid-19 certificates.

The court rejected a petition filed by Sabrina seeking bail in the case.

The HC bench of Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain and Justice K M Zahid Sarwar passed the rejection order considering that the bail petition was not presented properly before it.

During hearing of the petition, the bench said it will not grant bail to Sabrina as the trial court has already recorded statements of 11 witnesses of the case and the trial proceedings are at the final stage, Deputy Attorney General Monirul Islam told reporters.

Sabrina's lawyer Syed Mamun Mahub could not be reached for comments.



A bunch of surgical masks have been left to dry on the verandah of this Tejgaon household, even though they're not meant to be washed and reused. While non-medical fabric masks can be washed and used multiple times, these surgical masks should be disposed of promptly after use.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Man, dropped off bus unconscious, dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man -- who was dropped off a moving bus in an unconscious state in the capital, passed away minutes after he was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Shafiqul Islam (38), manager of a Narayanganj based garment factory.

Hailing from Daulatpur upazila in Khulna, Shafiqul used to live in Narayanganj's Bandar upazila with his wife and daughter, deceased's brother Sirajul Islam said, adding that they did not know where Shafiqul was headed on the bus.

A rickshaw-puller, Ibrahim, said he was taking rest near the DMCH new building when some passengers of a Gabtoli-bound bus dropped Shafiqul off in an unconscious state and asked him to take him to the hospital immediately.

Doctors declared him dead after Ibrahim and another rickshaw-puller took him to the emergency unit around 3:45pm, said Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH police outpost.

One of the rickshaw pullers fled after Shafiqul was declared dead while police were quizzing the other, he said.

Sub-inspector Munsir Abdul Lokman of Chawkbazar Police Station said they were investigating whether the deceased fell prey to a dope gang in the bus.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy, he said.

BNPS extends capital support to women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Nari Progati Shangha (BNPS) has taken initiatives to build capacity and capital support for women who have lost their job or capital as vendors during the pandemic.

Last Monday, Dhaka east sector of BNPS supported 20 women in the first phase at Sabujbagh area of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

Deputy director of the organisation, Shahnaz Sumi, yesterday said they have a plan to support at least 5,000 poor and marginalised women who lost their job or capital for small businesses. They are providing training on small businesses for them. Everyone will get Tk 5,000 to restart their businesses.

Suye Min Zho, deputy secretary and regional

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