

CASE AGAINST ROZINA

‘A threat to independent journalism’

Eminent citizens concerned over health ministry’s no-confidence petition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Twenty eminent citizens yesterday expressed concern over the health ministry filing a no-confidence petition on the final report in a case filed against Prothom Alo’s special correspondent Rozina Islam.

The final report had stated that the allegations against Rozina could not be proven.

They called for a fair and impartial investigation into the matter with respect to the law and court.

In a statement, eminent citizens said Rozina was confined to a room of the health ministry inside the Secretariat for around six hours and tormented there while performing her professional duties on May 17, 2021, before being handed over to Shahbagh police.

Later, the ministry filed a case against Rozina under two sections of the Official Secrets Act and the Penal Code. She was released on bail after languishing for six days.

“None of the sections under which the case was filed against Rozina Islam can apply to a professional



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

‘DCs, UNOs running the show now’
AL lawmaker blasts govt officials in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League MP from Thakurgaon-2 M Dabirul Islam yesterday in parliament blasted government officials, including deputy commissioners and upazila nirbahi officers, saying that they are running their areas while the roles of lawmakers are being neglected.

He alleged that the attitude of government officials is that the country became independent through their words and the people’s representatives are outsiders.

The AL MP made the allegations while participating in the discussion on the thanksgiving motion on President Abdul Hamid’s speech.

Dabirul said currently, public representatives cannot even give a blanket using the government’s relief fund. “We [MPs] are at the mercy of UNOs and government officials.”

He said, “In my district and area, I have seen that UNOs are doing everything. The idea is that the country was liberated through their words. We are strangers to them.”

He claimed that the situation is not very different in other areas.

“There are many MPs in this parliament whose areas are ruled by government officials. We are just elected. They are the owners of real power,” he said.

Mujibnagar university bill passed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Mujibnagar University, Meherpur Bill, 2023 was passed in parliament yesterday.

Education Minister Dipu Moni moved the bill which was unanimously passed by voice vote.

The proposed university would be prototypes of other public universities.

There will be a business incubator to make the university students

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER TIMING				
FEBRUARY 3				
Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:30	4:15	5:52	7:15
JAMAAAT 6:05	1:15	4:30	5:56	7:45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION				

AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA

A vibrant second day

DIPAN NANDY

Rafia Ahmed tagged her three-year-old son along with her on the second day of the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, who was seen following her around, wanting to buy some books on “cars”.

Meanwhile, Kavya Binte Ananya, a teenager, came with her friends from Dhanmondi. “It’s heaven for booklovers. I came with my friends to take a look at the new books published this year and we hope to come back again,” said Kavya.

This was the picture on the annual fair’s second day, a vibrant weekend with the presence of readers of all ages and walks of life.



Publishers were also happy with the turnout of the crowd. Aditya Antor, publisher of Ittadi Gratha Prakash, said, “It’s a good sign for the Boi Mela. We hope to see greater numbers of people tomorrow (today) as well.”

The unveiling ceremony of poet Shaibal Talukder’s first book of poetry “Ekaki Brikkher Gaan” (Biddyaprokash)



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

was held at Bangla Academy’s Kabi Shamsur Rahman seminar room yesterday. Professor Syed Manjurul Islam was the chief guest at the function, followed by a discussion on the book held by Mahjabin Ahmad Mimi, Farid Kabir, Obaid Akash and Shakira Parveen.

“Shaibal Talukder saw life and brought that life into poetry. He expressed his thoughts in poetic language,” said Prof Islam.

According to Bangla Academy, 21 new books were published on the first day of the book fair.

Among them are President Abdul Hamid’s “Amar Jibanniti Amar Rajniti” (Bangla Academy),

Korean filmmaker Kim Ki-Duk’s “Basonto, Grishma, Sharat, Sheet ... Abong Basonta” (Translated by Auditya Falguni), Pias Majid’s “Marble Faler Mousum” (Oitijhya), Wahiduddin Mahmud’s “Unnayanshil Desher Ganatantrik Somajtantro: Ekti Ruprekha”, Scott MacMillan’s “Hope Over Fate: Fazle Hasan Abed and the Science of Ending Global Poverty” (Baatighar), and Mohammad Mufazzal’s “Manorath” (Somoy Prokashon).

In the afternoon, a discussion, titled “Bangla Lokoshaite Hature Kabita”, was held on the main stage of the fair, where Bilu Kabir read an essay.

Trees fall victim to dev, once again

DSCC fells 300 trees on Saat Masjid Road’s median strip



SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) felled around 300 trees planted on the median strip of Saat Masjid Road in Dhanmondi to expand the island, much to the dismay of environmentalists and locals.

The felling began over three weeks ago from Zigatola to Shankar’s Saat Masjid road, a stretch of around 900 metres. Locals have held human chains over the last few days, demanding an immediate end to the mindless felling of trees.

DSCC cleared the area to expand the median strip without permission from the forest department. The cabinet division in February last year made it mandatory to secure permission to cut any trees even at one’s homestead.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw that the space between the newly constructed strip does not have enough space for planting trees. Besides, another 400 metres of the existing strip have been removed, causing the trees to fall on the road.

Sajjid Hossain, a local tea shop owner, said, “Two weeks ago the trees were cut down at night. Gradually, all the trees were cut down by a crane.”

“These trees used to shade the entire road,” he added.

Local Asad Hossain said, “Development work should not be done at the expense of trees. The trees have been here for almost 30 years. Now the entire road is barren.”

“This is a short-sighted decision that will have long-lasting impacts. The city corporation should have consulted with the community before making such a drastic move,” said Jinnat Begum, another local.

Sinthiya Begum, a teacher at a private school in the area, echoed the same and said, “This will have a significant impact on the local ecosystem by causing imbalances.”

A private contractor has been given the work of construction of a road divider. This correspondent visited the site office on the road yesterday, but no official was found to speak on the issue on behalf of the company, whose name remains unknown.

Contacted, Sharif Jamil, general secretary

of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said, “Even if the trees were not cut down, DSCC could have made it work. It was necessary to talk with the residents about these things.”

“Currently, the way the road dividers are being constructed, new trees will not grow there due to the lack of soil,” he added.

Contacted, Marina Nazneen, zonal executive officer (zone-1) of DSCC, said there was a risk of accidents and that’s why the trees were cut down.

“The median strip will now be expanded and made stronger. The trees that have been cut have little to do with environmental protection. Those were in place mainly for beautification,” she said.

When asked about acquiring necessary approvals, she replied, “This work does not require the permission of the forest department or the Department of Environment.”

“More trees will be planted where the trees were cut,” added Marina.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



2 get eyesight back from posthumous donation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty-nine-year-old Nandita Barua’s consent to donate her organs after her death has given back eyesight to two others after successful cornea transplantations.

The transplants took place at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University recently, said a press release.

Nandita, a resident of Basabo, died while undergoing treatment in the ICU of BSMMU on Monday. She was suffering from kidney complications for a long time along with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) and brain stroke.

According to her family, Nandita expressed her will to donate her body posthumously. When she passed away, with the consent of the family, cornea specialists of BSMMU collected her cornea. BSMMU Ophthalmology Department Associate



Sixty-nine-year-old Nandita Barua expressed her will to donate her body posthumously. When she passed away, with the consent of the family, cornea specialists of BSMMU collected the deceased’s cornea.

Professor Dr Mohammad Shish Rahman and Assistant Professor Dr Rajashree Das transplanted cornea in the eyes of Abdul Aziz (50), a deed writer of Patuakhali, and Jannatul Ferdousi (23), an honours student at Kaukhali College in Jhalkathi.

Nandita was born on June 2, 1953 in Patia of Chattogram. Her husband Swami Babul Prasad Barua was a senior official of Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation. She left behind two daughters and a son. Her daughters Shapla Barua and Senjuti Barua are respectively a poet and writer.

At a programme on Wednesday at BSMMU, Nandita’s two daughters also expressed their wish for posthumous body donation.

BSMMU VC Pro Md Sharfuddin Ahmed said, “Humanity will remember her contribution. In the past month, we have successfully transplanted corneas in the eyes of 12 people in this process.”

ARBITRARY ARREST
Hearing on review petition on Feb 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday adjourned till February 9 the hearing of a review petition filed by the government challenging its judgement against the arbitrary exercise of power by law enforcers.

In its 2016 judgement, the SC upheld the 2003 High Court verdict, which ruled against exercise of arbitrary power by law enforcers using some provisions of the CrPC, including Section 54.

Section 54 empowers police to arrest anyone on mere suspicion. A seven-member bench headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the order.

In a written argument, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin mentioned some inconsistencies between the SC guidelines and relevant existing laws, said DAG Amit Talukdar without elaborating.

The HC delivered its verdict on April 7, 2003, responding to a petition filed by some rights organisations, including BLAST and individuals after the death of university student Shamim Reza Rubel in police custody on July 23, 1998.



The campaign for administering the fourth dose of Covid-19 vaccines is currently underway. Many were seen taking the jab at the 250-Bed TB Hospital in the capital’s Shyamoli yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Couple burnt to death in their home

Fire started from leaking gas cylinder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A couple was burned to death in Dhaka’s Bhatara early yesterday, as their house caught on fire due to a leaky gas cylinder.

The deceased – Abdul Majid Sikder, 65, and his wife Taslima Akter, 47 – lived alone in a flat on the second-floor of a six-storey building.

Rakibul Hasan, duty-officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence, said the fire originated from a leaking gas cylinder. Two firefighting units rushed there, but neighbours had already doused the fire.

Shahidul Islam, owner of a nearby house, said he saw a blaze in the kitchen from

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3