

Youth killed over easy bike

One held

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Lalmonirhat

A youth was strangled to death in Teesta char area of Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila on Friday night.

The deceased is Rafiqul Islam, 25.

After recovering his body, police arrested Ayub Ali, 26, a friend of Rafiqul, after his brother Amjad Hossain filed a case.

Patgram Police Station OC Omar Farooq said Rafiqul was killed over a battery-run easy bike.

Police said Ayub and Rafiqul came to visit the latter's stepbrother Zulfikar Ali in Patgram's Guchchagram area on the easy bike from Dinajpur's Birganj. The two went to the char area, where Ayub strangled Rafiqul, the owner of the easy bike.

Amjad said, "Ayub is known as a miscreant in Birganj area. He befriended my brother with the intention of stealing his easy bike."

Appeal for help

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Pataukhali

Neshar Uddin from Barguna's Patharghata is undergoing treatment at Abu Naser Specialised Hospital in Khulna as both the kidneys of the 46-year-old were damaged.

He was diagnosed with kidney disease about a year ago.

Dr Obaidul Haque Sumon, a kidney specialist, who is currently treating Neshar Uddin, advised that the patient's kidney has to be transplanted.

For his treatment, around Tk 6 lakh will be needed which the day labourer patient cannot afford.

Neshar Uddin, who has a four-member family, already sold his land to bear his medical expenses.

He said he has to travel to Khulna from Patharghata eight times every month for dialysis. It costs a lot of money.

Therefore, he is urging the well-off of the society to help him financially. Aid can be sent to Md Neshar Uddin, Account No: 777010004754, Rupali Bank, Patharghata Branch, Barguna; and bKash and Nagad No: 01719594080.

DU admission

FROM PAGE 3
3,30278 aspirants contested for the 6,085 seats in the exam held yesterday in seven divisional cities alongside Dhaka between 11:00am and 12:30pm.

"No anomalies were found during the tests," DU Pro Vice-Chancellor (administration) Prof Muhammad Samad told journalists after the exams.

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KARATOYA IN GAIBANDHA

Once a flowing river, now dumping ground

MOSTAFA SHABUI,
back from Gaibandha

Karatoya river in Gaibandha has transformed into a dumping ground as the district's Gobindaganj municipality trucks have been dumping trash on a dried-up section of the river in broad daylight.

In 1996, a three-vent regulator was set up by Water Development Board in Gaibandha near Khulshi village to prevent flood in the upazila town. From then on, the part of the river (running around 10km) on the village's side remains dry for nine months in a year with little water flowing through it during monsoon.

Upon visiting the river near Bhanga Bridge on the Gobindaganj-Dinajpur regional road yesterday noon, this correspondent found a municipality truck unloading heaps of rubbish on the dried land.

"Compost manure is being manufactured in the municipality dumping ground so we were asked to dump the rubbish here.

This has been going for a few days," said a driver.

To protect the 116-km river (from Gaibandha to Bogura) from encroachments and

Following the petition, the High Court issued a show-cause notice and directed the respondents to take measures in this regard. They respondents

mayor of the municipality, said, "The soil under a wall under the Bhanga Bridge has moved so we are dumping garbage here on the request of locals to prevent the wall



pollution, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) filed a writ petition against 20 government institutions and officials, including the then upazila nirbahi officer in 2015.

concerned were asked to take off all the closures to revive the river and the municipality was strictly asked to keep from dumping garbage on the riverbeds.

Mukitir Rahman Rafi,

from falling."

The mayor, however, called this correspondent back after half an hour and said, "There is no river there anymore and we are not dumping any rubbish in the river."

Market at the cost

FROM PAGE 5
of their shops in the market. The university authorities also joined hands with the municipality as part of their bid to remove all memorabilia of Bhasani from Santosh, according to locals' allegations.

Speakers addressing the human chain said of the shopkeepers, at least 32 are poor tea vendors and 10 are people with disabilities. "What will happen to their lives?" they asked.

Earlier, they submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner in Tangail to stop the market construction bid and sent the copies to different offices, including RHD and the Department of Environment (DoE).

Azad Khan Bhasani, grandson of Maulana Bhasani, said his grandfather, a prominent political personality in the country, named the kitchen market after his spiritual guru Peer Shahjaman. "The proposed name of the new market building to be constructed is Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University Market," he said.

Asked, Prof Md Farhad Hossain, vice-chancellor of MBSTU, said the kitchen market is situated on the road. "University students and teachers used to shop from the market. Accidents and casualties used to happen there."

"After the municipality mayor presented his proposal of constructing a concrete market building replacing the worn-out kitchen market, we formed a committee led by the university's treasurer to act in this regard," said the VC.

Later, a mutual understanding was established between the university and municipality on paper that the municipality will construct the market and the university will acquire 35 percent of its shares, while the municipality will

acquire 65 percent. After 30 years, the university will get ownership of the part of the market which will be constructed on its land.

"We don't intend to destroy Bhasani's memorabilia. However, necessary infrastructure development is a timely need," added Prof Farhad.

When asked about the filling of ponds and rehabilitation of kitchen market traders, he suggested that this correspondent contact the municipality mayor in this regard.

However, this newspaper could not get the comments of Mayor SM Sirajul Haque Khan Alamgir, who is also the president of the AL town unit, as his private secretary informed that he will talk on this issue later.

Jamir Uddin, deputy director of DoE in Tangail, said he has already received a copy of the memorandum from the kitchen market's traders. "No one can fill any water bodies. It's a punishable offence under the environmental laws. If the allegations are found true, the DoE will sue them."

Although the protestors mentioned RHD as the owner of the said land, Aliul Hossain, executive engineer of Tangail RHD, said they have already handed over the road to the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED). "Hence, the roadside land is also under the jurisdiction of LGED."

However, Rafiqul Islam, executive engineer of LGED in Tangail, said they have no documents for the roadside land's jurisdiction.

Contacted, Jasim Uddin Haider, deputy commissioner in Tangail, said he has received the memorandum from the traders of the kitchen market and directed the assistant commissioner (land) of Tangail Sadar upazila to check which office has the land's jurisdiction.

Stop illegal earth

FROM PAGE 3
Addressing the discussion, IPD advisor Professor Akhtar Mahmud said the filling of a portion of Hatirjheel and the construction of an elevated expressway through Panthakunja Park is being done without proper planning.

Hecriticised the decision, calling it a "suicidal" one and questioned how such a project could be implemented without coordination with the relevant authorities as per the Town Improvement Act of 1953.

Prof Akhtar further demanded that those responsible for such destruction of the

environment and urban areas should be held accountable.

Adil Mohammed Khan, executive director of IPD, warned that the construction work of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway will not only affect Hatirjheel and Panthakunja Park but also severely disrupt traffic and livelihoods in the surrounding areas.

He emphasised the need for projects to be conducted transparently and following the law to prevent any further damage to the city's environment.

IPD Director Ariful Islam also spoke at the discussion.

BNP will vote

FROM PAGE 5
portfolio in BNP as well.

"BNP has not boycotted the election, as is commonly believed. Their activists and leaders are running for council positions," Karim added.

He has also claimed that even Awami League activists will also vote for Islamic Andolon.

When asked about his hopes for a level playing

field in the upcoming election, Karim expressed both fears and hopes. "We want the elections to be fair. We want CCTV cameras with magistrates at every polling centre," he added.

Karim also highlighted his plans for development in Barishal, focusing on the Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital and the welfare of slum dwellers.

Relieve us from

FROM PAGE 5
Another BNP leader, Muslim Uddin, said, "There was no clear directive regarding councillor elections from the party. They show-caused us out of nowhere on Friday. Now I have sought relief from party activities as I was left with no choice."

THINGS HEATING UP
Meanwhile, supporters of the AI-nominated candidate Azamat Ullah Khan allegedly vandalised the electoral office of independent candidate Zaida Kahtun, mother of suspended mayor Zahangir Alam.

The incident occurred on Friday night in Bhandari Goli area of ward 49, following a heated exchange between supporters of both candidates. At least five supporters from both groups were injured.

Confirming the information, Sub-inspector of Tongi East Police Station Ohid Mia said, "After getting the information, we went to the spot and found chairs lying haphazardly in Zaida's election office. We have asked the aggrieved parties to file a written complaint with the police station."

For the love of animals

Youth group saving wildlife since 2020

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Mymensingh

A group of youths has been continuing their efforts to save forest animals and birds that have fallen in danger because of humans or nature.

The volunteers of "Save the Animals of Susang", a rescue team, have so far rescued some 50 animals from different areas of Durgapur and adjacent Kalmakanda upazila.

They started their mission with a slogan "Save the wildlife" in August in 2020. Now there are over 30 volunteers, mostly students.

The volunteers said Netrakona's Durgapur is home to a forest area stretching across both sides of the border with

India. Especially, Susang Durgapur is host to diverse wild animals for decades. Susang is some five kilometres away from the Indian border.

Animals, including elephants and reptiles, frequently move into different areas like Ranikhong, Chandigarh, Bagichapara, Chakar Muktarpara, Chak Lengura, Gopalpur, and Teribazar in Durgapur.

In Mymensingh region, Susang Durgapur used to be a sanctuary for wild animals once. But due to deforestation, the natural forest land started to

disappear and the situation took a serious turn in the last four decades.

Rifat Ahmed Rasel, founding president of the forum, said the rescued animals are from Meghalaya's Baghmara area in India.

Rink Islam, joint-secretary of the group, said there were many obstacles during the its launch. "Now locals inform volunteers about the wildlife needing care."

UNO Rajib Ul Ahasan said, "The group members have been doing a great job in rescuing these animals and releasing them."



Colonial laws still being used

FROM PAGE 3
the Indian Supreme Court suspended all the pending cases under the sedition law and the Indian government is currently reviewing it.

In Pakistan, the Lahore High Court has already termed the law unconstitutional and the final verdict is pending with its Supreme Court, he said.

About the DSA, he said, "The act became a weapon to muzzle the protesting voice."

Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua said the government does not need any law to put someone in jail, the will of the government high-ups is enough to do so.

He said the sedition act was first implemented by the British to suppress the Swadeshi movement.

"We have achieved our independence after sacrificing numerous lives. Therefore, we should have a different attitude from the British and Pakistan rulers. But when the state assimilated these oppressive laws, it lost its spirit of independence. Interestingly, some acts enacted after the Liberation War, such as the Special Powers Act of 1974 and DSA 2018, are even more oppressive," he added.

Prof Tanzimuddin Khan of Dhaka University's international relations department said DSA is a result of a colonial mindset. Tanzim also said the DSA did not result in reduction of cybercrime, hacking, stalking or digital theft. "It only muzzles independent voices. We should act politically against such laws and change the whole structure."

ZI Khan Panna,

chairperson of Ain o Salish Kendra, said all kinds of oppressive laws should be repealed.

"The spirit of our Liberation War was to build a repression-free society. But if we keep enacting such repressive acts, that would go against this spirit," he said.

Panna mentioned that around 30 percent of the DSA cases were filed against journalists. However, the larger share of the accused consists of people and minorities. "We need to speak up against such laws and protest this situation," he added.

Faruq Faisel, regional director of the South Asian chapter of rights organisation Article 19, said the British-era laws were abusive and restrictive of freedom. "These laws do not have any value in an independent country. But we have been carrying them over. It is time to discuss renewing and amending these laws."

"Article 39 of the constitution also restricted criticism about the relations with any friendly foreign states. It is also a violation of the right to freedom of speech and expression for anyone who wants to say something for the country's betterment. Democracy is impossible without free media. No government can hold fair elections without ensuring press freedom," Faruq added.

Zillur Rahman, executive director of Centre for Governance Studies, said there are no laws regarding the extrajudicial killings and enforced

disappearance, that occur in the country often.

Prof SM Shameem Reza of the mass communication and journalism department at Dhaka University said laws like the Sedition Act or Article 39 of the constitution allow the state to form other laws like Digital Security Act.

He suggested incorporating the issue of freedom of expression in textbooks and the educational curriculum.

In the keynote presentation, Emraan Azad, in charge of the Law Desk at The Daily Star, said section 295A of the Penal Code was incorporated in section 28 of the DSA.

"The clause has criminalised hurting religious sentiments through the publication and broadcasting of information online or in any other platforms. However, the terms have remained vague under this provision," said Emraan.

About Article 39 of the constitution, he said Suranjit Sengupta and MN Larma opposed the imposition of any restriction on freedom of the press in 1972. Back in 1956, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also opposed the imposition of such restrictions in his speech in the then Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

He also spoke about some provisions of CrPc, which also affect press freedom, including Section 99A, 108, 144 (3), 295A and so on.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, presided over the event.

Five burnt

FROM PAGE 3
Plastic Surgery in Dhaka.

Md Alauddin, deputy director of fire service (Dhaka zone-4), said the incident took place at Billal Enterprise in Jamgora Tetul Tala area around 9:00am when gas was being refilled from large cylinders to small ones.

Suddenly, four cylinders exploded, causing fire, he said. Two fire service units rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control.

Alauddin said the tin-shed shop had neither any approval to refill cylinders nor any firefighting equipment.



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EVP & Head of Division please

FROM PAGE 5
one of the students seeking anonymity.

The two-storey Shaheed Titumir Hostel offers slightly better living conditions with all 20 rooms being available. The hostel also has a dining and a TV room. However, only 12 of its 24 bathrooms are functioning.

The students pay Tk 2,100 for two meals and Tk 400 as rent, monthly.

However, the meal quality is poor and the students are served the same food during both

meals.

Besides, this institution requires a total of 201 teachers, but there are currently only 55 workings here, leaving 146 positions unfilled.

With 74 employed as technical staffers, the institute still has 54 posts vacant out of 128.

LABS WITHOUT EQUIPMENT

The institute has six laboratories, one for each department. However, only a few modern equipment and raw materials are available to students.

"Sometimes, we don't even find scotch tapes. Besides, only one set of screwdrivers is available while we need three at least," said Roni Matubbar, a student of the institute's RAC (refrigeration and air conditioning engineering) Technology department.

There are no inverter ACs or refrigerators, meaning students miss out on the chance to study improved devices, he added.

Principal Akkach Ali Sheikh said, "Plans have been taken to modernise five new workshops, including

the hydraulic, geotechnical, structure, power shop, and software laboratories."

Agreeing that the hostels need immediate renovation, he said, "The works are expected to start this June."

"We are repeatedly urging Bangladesh Public Service Commission to appoint teachers while asking the authorities for facilities and resources to solve the problems. However, their long and hectic procedures cause delays, resulting in the students' suffering," he noted.

"We have also appointed

a few alumni as additional teachers to make sure that the classes are not hampered," he added.

Black gowns

FROM PAGE 3
Witnesses said Shafiul was heading back to the chamber after a court hearing in the afternoon when he suddenly collapsed in front of the Metropolitan Bar Association. He was declared dead at Dhaka National Hospital, according to media reports.

The lawyers claimed that he died from a heat stroke.