

'DEFAMING' INFO MINISTER Seven sued again in 2nd DSA case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Another case was filed yesterday against seven people under the Digital Security Act for making a “fake, baseless, and defamatory” video on Information Minister Hasan Mahmud and publishing it on YouTube and Facebook.

The minister's personal assistant, Emrul Karim, filed the case with Chattogram Divisional Cyber Tribunal.

The accused are Nazmus Saquib, who runs the YouTube channel and Facebook page titled “Nagorik TV”, HM Kamal, Azad Sahadat, Sany Prodhan, Saiful Islam Talukdar, Khondokar Islam, and Md Hazi

Taking the case into cognisance, tribunal Judge Jahirul Kabir yesterday ordered the counter terrorism unit of Chattogram Metropolitan Police to investigate the case and submit a report, said Nikhil Kumar, lawyer of the plaintiff.

Harun Rashid.

This is the second case filed against the seven on same charges.

The channel and Facebook page has no connection with private TV channel Nagorik TV.

The persons who liked, shared, and commented on the video were also made accused.

Taking the case into cognisance, tribunal Judge Jahirul Kabir yesterday ordered the counter terrorism unit of Chattogram Metropolitan Police to investigate the case and submit a report, said Nikhil Kumar, lawyer of the plaintiff.

“The plaintiff also filed a petition seeking removal of the content from Facebook and YouTube. The court asked the Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission and the other authorities concerned to take necessary steps in this regard,” the lawyer told The Daily Star.

On Sunday night, Md Ariful Islam, 36, forest and environment affairs secretary of Rangunia upazila Jubo League, lodged a DSA case with Chawkbazar Police Station in Chattogram city against the same people.

The FIRs of the two cases are similar.

According to the case statement, accused Nazmus Saquib defamed the information minister by spreading “false, baseless, and fabricated information” by uploading a 13-minute video on YouTube and a Facebook page.



The many images of DHAKA METRO RAIL



SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

I have been using the metro rail service sporadically through the past couple of months, and I have to admit, I treat it like a bit of a luxury. Even though I have had the privilege of using private transport for my commute to and from work, which is about 17 kilometres away from my home, I often find myself feeling like I have indulged a bit when I use the metro. While the obvious advantage of not having to sit in traffic for hours has a lot to do with this feeling, I believe that the spectacle of the station and the metro itself is what takes the cake for me.

I often opt to wait a few extra minutes and catch the next train instead of getting on the first train I can find. In those six minutes, give or take a couple of minutes, I find myself observing all the people around me. I admit, a lot of the time people are also staring back at me, often judging me for my eccentric sense of fashion.

However, as I indulge myself in this odd kaleidoscope of familiar images, there are a few that I enjoy most.

Almost every time that I have used the metro rail, I have come across a family with children whose eyes are filled with wonder as they prepare themselves for their first-ever metro rail journey. With almost identical expressions, these kids rush towards the train as the gates open, and at the insistence of their parents, sit down, only to jump up as soon as the train has started. They sometimes press their faces against the windows, and sometimes circle around the poles holding on for support. Sometimes, if they notice their parents getting distracted, they even let the poles go for a few seconds, just for the rush.

However, what may just be my favourite picture is when I notice young girls, often college students travelling by themselves, lugging around their heavier-than-self backpacks and slouching on the first seat they can

find empty. What I love observing is the case with which young girls find themselves boarding the metro.

Just a few months ago, I would not have been able to fathom a situation where a young girl would be able to avail the services of a public transport service in Dhaka by herself with such ease. Having been on the receiving end of many unsolicited remarks and unwelcome shoves on the streets of Dhaka, it is refreshing to see that the female compartment has amounted to more than mere lip service.

I have found a peculiar sense of reflection and familiarity in the vast sea of unfamiliar faces I get to see at the stations and in the trains, filled with people from all walks of life going about their regular days. While we have all heard of the many strides, we, as a nation, have been taking towards the concept of development, the metro rail is the one that has resonated the most with the idea of moving forward for me.

‘Rab framing me for robbery attempt’

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on documents that he has been arrested in the case, reads the order.

The recorded calls heard in the court corroborate what the accused's mother has been saying, it reads, adding that the complainant has not been able to satisfactorily explain the discrepancies.

The magistrate directed the Rab director general to conduct a departmental investigation into the matter and take steps accordingly within 30 working days.

In one of the recorded calls produced before the court by Mojaflor's lawyer, Mojaflor was heard telling his mother that he was brought to the Rab office from Kamalapur.

Modumala said her son was arrested in a false case.

“Rab picked up my innocent son. He is the breadwinner of the family. The legal expenses are a major burden for us,” she told The Daily Star.

After he walked out of jail on bail on March 1, Mojaflor said when he was detained, officers in plainclothes told him to pay Tk 10,000 if he wanted to be free.

He alleges that he was framed in the attempted robbery case because he failed to pay the money.

THE CASE

The case was filed on February 16 with Sabujbagh Police Station against Mojaflor and two other men named Hasan and Raju. A court sent them to jail the same day.

Just one and a half months later, Sub-Inspector Yakub Ali of the same police station pressed charges against the accused.

The charge sheet mostly echoed what was written in the complaint and said the accused were preparing to commit a robbery when they got arrested.

About the charge that Rab found a steel cutter from his possession, Mojaflor told The Daily Star that nothing like that happened.

“After taking us to their office, a

Rab member brought something like cutters or knives before us,” he said.

He added that he did not pull a rickshaw on February 15 as he felt unwell. He went to Kamalapur railway station around 7:30pm with Hasan to pick up a relative of Hasan.

“After reaching Kamalapur station, we had tea at a cup of tea stall outside the station. As we were walking on the footpath in front of the Eastern Kamalapur Commercial Complex, several men in plainclothes held us and forced us to go near Dhaka Railway Station Central Jame Masjid.

“I asked them why they detained me, but they did not reply. I also requested them repeatedly to release me, saying my family depends on my income, but would not listen.”

He and Hasan were then forced to get into a white HiAce along with another man. They waited in the microbus for one and a half hours before being taken to a footbridge in Sabujbagh. From there, they were taken to the Rab 3 office in Shahjahanpur.

Noted rights activist Nur Khan said, “The Rab members, for whom a man was accused in a case, should be thoroughly investigated. Otherwise, an incident like this will become a disaster for the force one day.”

He also urged the authorities to relieve Mojaflor from the case soon.

A hearing on the case will be held today.

Rab-3 Commanding Officer Lt Col Arif Mohiuddin Ahmed neither answered the phone when The Daily Star called him nor replied to text messages.

Mojaflor's lawyer HM Rohul Amin Mollah said, “The investigation officer pressed charges against my client without a proper investigation. If the case was properly investigated, Mojaflor would have been relieved from the charges.”

Despite several attempts over the phone on April 12, The Daily Star could not reach Sub-inspector Yakub Ali for comments about his charge sheet.

Councillor races to be close in Sylhet

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Besides, there is a huge difference between the two mayor aspirants in terms of the organisational strength of their parties.

The ruling AL has deployed its full strength to get back the Sylhet City Corporation mayor post, which a BNP man has occupied for the last 10 years.

Eight candidates are running, but the main battle will be between Anwaruzzaman and Nazrul, said locals.

However, participation of leaders of the BNP and its associate bodies in all 42 wards, Jamaat contenders in at least 20 wards and more than one AL candidates in several wards has made the polls to councillor posts competitive.

“The outcome of the mayoral race is clear. The real contest will be among the councillor aspirants,” Imran Hossain, a tea stall owner in Tilagarh area, told The Daily Star.

AL worried over turnout in Rajshahi

FROM PAGE 1

The party activists would work to take voters to the polling stations, Liton told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said his supporters made door-to-door visits to urge the voters to exercise their franchise.

Nurul Islam Sarkar Aslam, chief election agent for Liton, said the city AL organised at least 200 meetings with voters from all sections of the society, including marginalised communities, to encourage them to go to the polling centres.

“Though there is no strong rival for Liton, we didn't take the electioneering lightly,” he told The Daily Star.

He said they expect that the turnout would be at least 65 percent.

With the BNP staying away from the election, Liton, also an AL presidium member, anticipates that the supporters of the opposition party and Jamaat e-Islami would show up at the policing centres to vote for their favourite councillor candidates.

“If the supporters of the BNP and the Jamaat vote for other mayor candidates, it might make victory

SYLHET CITY POLLS	
TOTAL VOTERS	4,87,753
POLLING STATIONS	190
MAYOR CANDIDATES	8
WARD COUNCILLOR CANDIDATES	273
RESERVED WARD COUNCILLOR CANDIDATES	87

A significant number of the councillor candidates are either leaders or activists of BNP and its associate bodies.

The BNP suspended 43 of its leaders

RAJSHAHI CITY POLLS	
TOTAL VOTERS	3,51,982
POLLING STATIONS	155
MAYOR CANDIDATES	4
WARD COUNCILLOR CANDIDATES	111
RESERVED WARD COUNCILLOR CANDIDATES	46

difficult for me,” he said.

Abdul Hamid Sarkar Tekon, a five-time councillor of ward-22 and also the elder brother of Dablu Sarkar, alleged that despite being the general secretary of the city AL, his brother was left out of Liton's electoral campaign.

Attempts were made to show Dablu

for joining the polls ignoring the party decision to boycott the election. Around 50 more BNP men are also in the councillor race.

In ward-5, four BNP men – Kamal Miah, former convener of the ward unit BNP, members of the unit Khaled Akbar Chowdhury, Aminur Rahman Khokan and BNP activist Shahed Siraj – are running.

There is a similar situation in ward-30 where four BNP activists are running.

In ward-31, -32 and -33, two BNP men are running.

Beside the contest among BNP men, races between AL men are also hot.

For instance, in ward-39, suspended president of Chhatra Dal's Sylhet district unit Altaf Hossain Sumon is competing against three AL leaders – Rezaul Rahman Mostafa, Shahab Uddin Lal, and AL Amir Uddin, organising secretary of Sadar upazila unit.

Sarkar as an anti-Liton politician, he added.

“Despite all these obstacles, my brother is working independently to ensure the victory of the Awami League candidate,” said Tekon, who is running for councillor.

Asked about the reason for the exclusion of Dablu Sarkar from electioneering, the AL nominee said that they received several complaints against him.

“Some senior party leaders had raised concern about involving him in polls campaigns as a scandalous video clip of him went viral on social media. We wanted to avoid controversies in our electoral activities as it could potentially have a negative impact on the polls results,” Liton said.

Nawsher Ali, a key person in Liton's campaign team and also the city AL vice-president, said even though a party rebel ran in the 2008 mayoral election, he could not bag more than 5,000 votes. Liton won that election by a significant margin.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mohammad Shahriar Alam, local

SSC exam on full syllabus, HSC still on short

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Exams for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) next year will be held following the full syllabus, while exams for Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) will be held with a curtailed syllabus.

The decision was taken yesterday in a meeting held at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital, chaired by Education Minister Dipu Moni.

Prof Tapan Kumar Sarker, chairman of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka, confirmed the matter to The Daily Star.

He said that HSC exams for next year will be based on a curtailed syllabus, while the SSC exam of the same year will be held on the complete syllabus like the pre-Covid 19 times.

SSC and HSC exams for 2021, 2022, and 2023 were all held on curtailed syllabuses due to study loss during Covid 19 pandemic.

4 sued for medical staff hiring irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission sued four people yesterday over irregularities in the recruitment process for medical staff in 2020.

ACC Deputy Director Faruk Ahmed filed the case with its integrated district office in Dhaka, accusing Dr Sheikh Mohammad Hasan Imam, former director and president of the recruitment committee; Dr AFM Akhtar Hossain, former deputy director of DGHS; Harunur Rashid, Senior Assistant Teacher, Khilgaon Govt High School; and Professor Showkat Ali, chairman of Dhaka University's applied mathematics department.

According to the case statement, the DGHS recruitment process was marred by allegations of cheating. The answer sheets were tampered with, and it is suspected that this was done with the knowledge and cooperation of the two professors who were responsible for grading the exams.

Ex-customs official, wife sued for graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed two cases against a former customs official, his wife, and his daughter for accumulating around Tk 12 crore of wealth illegally beyond his known source of income and concealing information in the wealth statement.

The accused are Golam Kibria Hazari, former Revenue officer of Customs, Excise and VAT Training Academy, his wife Selina Akter, and his daughter Sadia Akter. They are residents of Masterpara in Feni.

Md Abdul Malek, assistant director of ACC Integrated Office-2, Chattogram filed the case accusing the trio, Md Atiqul Alam, deputy director of Chattogram ACC, told The Daily Star.

“Two separate cases were lodged for concealing wealth information in their statements and hiding huge amounts of money earned illegally from unknown sources. ACC filed the cases after investigation,” he added.

Three AL men are vying in ward-20. They are Sylhet city unit AL Joint General Secretary and incumbent councillor Azadur Rahman Azad, Swechchhasebak League leaders Mithu Talukder and Shubhra Chakraborty.

Talking to this newspaper, Abdul Quyum Chowdhury, president of Sylhet district BNP, said, “We have been closely monitoring so that no BNP supporters can work in favour of the expelled BNP leaders. We also asked them not to go to polling centres and we are expecting they will follow the instruction.”

“In the absence of the BNP, it has become a one-sided mayoral race, which may also impact the voter turnout. On the other hand, candidates of different parties in councillor races have made voters interested,” said Shah Shaheda Akhter, general secretary of Sylhet chapter's Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan), a civil society platform for good governance.

lawmakers Omor Faruk Chowdhury, and Ayeen Uddin, city and district AL general secretaries Dablu Sarkar, and Kazi Abdul Wadud Dara, and Mir Iqbal, chairman of Rajshahi Zilla Parishad, are known as opponents of Liton in the ruling party.

Mir Iqbal said, “We must vote for ‘boat’ without thinking about who has been given the party ticket.”

Asked if their supporters would go to the polling stations to vote for the AL candidate, he told The Daily Star that they would do it for sure.

Jatiya Party mayoral candidate Saiful Islam Swapan said he had expected that the polls to Barishal and Khulna city corporations would be free and fair, “but that did not happen”.

“The situation in Rajshahi could be the same,” he told this newspaper yesterday.

Four candidates are running for mayor while 112 are vying for the 30 posts of general ward councillors and 46 candidates are running for 10 reserved councillor seats for women in today's polls to Rajshahi City Corporation.