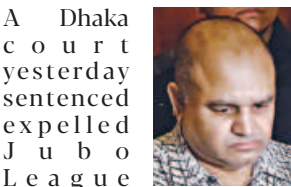


MONEY LAUNDERING  
GK Shamim  
jailed for  
10 yrs

COURT CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced expelled Jubo League leader Golam Kibria Shamim, widely known as GK Shamim, to 10 years in imprisonment in a case filed over laundering Tk 195 crore to Singapore and Malaysia.

His seven bodyguards – Md Delwar Hossain, Md Murad Hossain, Md Jahidul Islam, Md Shahidul Islam, Md Kamal Hossain, Md Samsad Hossain, and Md Aminul Islam – were each sentenced to four years in jail for assisting GK Shamim, a top contractor of government projects, in acquiring the laundered money.

The court also fined

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

FLOOD SITUATION IN NORTH  
Some areas remain inundated  
People in char areas are hit by food shortage

STAR REPORT

Flood water has started receding in five districts, leaving people in the areas in distress as their houses and crop fields remain inundated.

Those who took shelter at flood centres have started returning home to find their houses damaged.

With the grazing fields still submerged, rearing cattle has become a challenge.

Meanwhile, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) in its bulletin at 9:00 am yesterday said, “Water of all the major rivers in the north-eastern region of the country is receding, which is likely to continue throughout the next 24 hours.”

Our correspondents from different districts have reported on the sufferings of the flood-hit people.

“We took shelter on the causeway. We starved ourselves and lived in makeshift polythene tents for three days. After returning home on Sunday, we found our house and furniture badly damaged by flood water,” said Afas Ali, 65, of Char Harinchara village in Lalmonirhat

Sadar upazila.

“We have two cows and four goats. As all the grasslands have gone under water, we cannot find anything to feed the cattle,” said Hazrat Ali, 57, a resident of Char Falimari village in the same upazila.

Almost 250 families of Char Falimari village are facing similar problems, said Hazrat.

According to sources in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram administrations, some 16,000 families of 90 char areas have been affected by the floods and fishes of 65 ponds have been washed away in Lalmonirhat; and 15,000 families of 185 chars have been affected in Kurigram along with fishes of 412 ponds being washed away.

“We received around five kilograms of rice as relief. But it is highly inadequate. We are suffering from food crisis,” said a flood-victim Ebadul Islam, 45, at Kisamot Satnai char of Nilphamari’s Dimla upazila.

In Sirajganj, low-lying areas are still submerged even though the Jamuna has been flowing below danger levels since yesterday.

“Water levels of Jamuna River started decreasing since the early

hours of Monday. But it may rise again next week,” said Ranajit Kumar, sub-divisional engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Sirajganj.

Many people are marooned by flood water there.

Sirajganj District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO) Md Akhter Hossain said they were preparing a list of flood-hit people for carrying out relief works.

Tara Pramaink, 50, of the Pakhir char of Bogura’s Sariakandi upazila, said, “Our area has remained inundated for the last five days. Both we and our cattle are facing food crisis.”

In Tangail, crops and vegetable fields in some low-lying areas such as Bhuanpur, Kalihati, Sadar, Nagarpur and Mirzapur upazilas remained inundated till yesterday.

The officials concerned in the flood-hit districts said they have already distributed dry foods among the flood-victims, who would also be provided with financial assistance.

[Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Pabna, Bogura, Nilphamari and Tangail contributed to the report]

Zahangir,  
Zaida meet  
Hasina

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Gazipur City Corporation Mayor Zaida Khatun sought Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s directives on running the city and asked the PM to look after her son former GCC mayor Zahangir Alam yesterday.

The two met the PM at the PMO around 3:30pm.

Hasina assured the mayor of taking care of Zahangir, sources said.

The Awami League nominated Azmat Ullah Khan for GCC mayor in May. Zahangir also filed nominations for himself and his mother to run for mayor as independents.

After the EC scrapped his nomination, he started campaigning for Zaida who eventually won.

Zahangir became GCC mayor in 2018. He was expelled from the Awami League and suspended as mayor in November, 2021, after a video clip of him went viral.

3 sent to jail for rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A Rangpur court yesterday sent three people to jail for raping a woman and filming the act in Rangpur city’s Haragachh area.

Gonesh Roy, 35, Ershad Ali, 27, and Ratan Mia, 27, were arrested on Sunday.

According to Komal Mohanta, sub-inspector of Haragachh Police Station, the three broke into the woman’s house in Sonalipara village Sunday night.

Finding her home alone, Ershad and Gonesh raped her while Ratan filmed the act.

As the housewife screamed for help, locals rushed in and caught the three. Later that night, they were handed over to Haragachh Police Station.

The victim’s husband filed a case against the three on the same night.

80,000 yaba pills seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police yesterday arrested a young man with 80,000 yaba pills from the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in Narayanganj’s Kanchpur area.

Md Aktaruzzaman alias Dilshan, 25, from Nilphamari Sadar, is a member of a drug racket and has several narcotics cases filed against him, said police.

Acting on a tip-off, police conducted a drive on the east side of the Kanchpur Bridge area and detained Dilshan with the contraband drugs that he was carrying from Chattogram to Dhaka, Golam Mostofa Russel, district superintendent of police, told a press conference.

A case will be filed in this connection, said Ahsan Ullah, inspector of Sonargaon Police Station.

2 kids drown in pond

UNB, HABIGANJ

Two children drowned in a local pond at Dalgaon village in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Arif, 5, son of Zahirul and Karima, 7, daughter of Najir Mia of the village.

Mujibur Rahman, in charge of Mantala Police Camp, said Arif and Karima drowned while playing near the waterbody around 10:30am.

After noticing that their children were missing, their parents started searching for them and found their dead bodies floating in the local pond, he added.

A pall of gloom descended on the area following the death of the two children.

‘Drug dealer’ arrested  
with 2kg heroin

BSS, Rajshahi

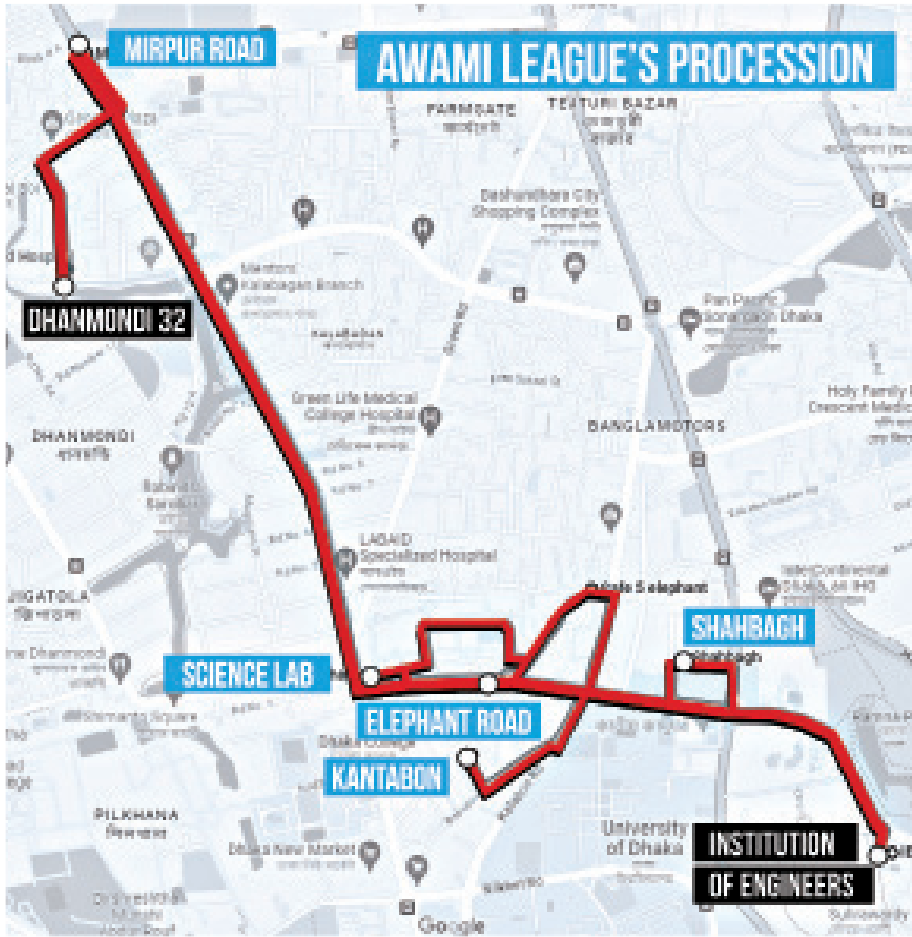
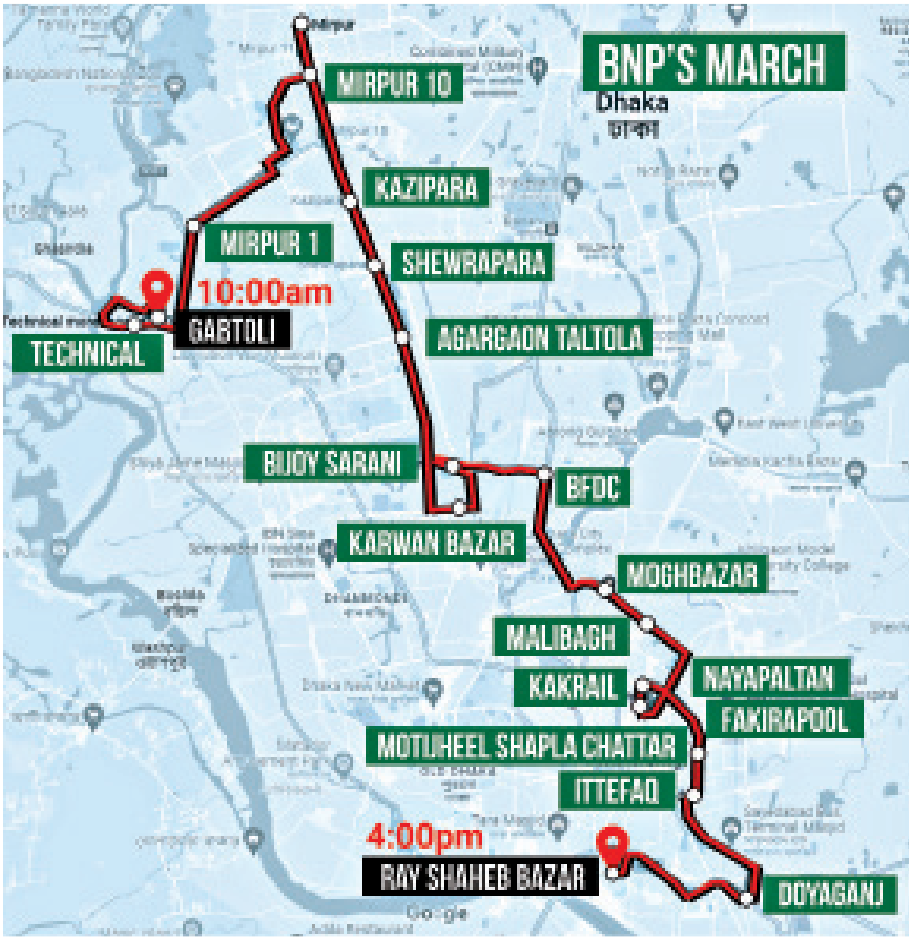
Rab detained a suspected drug dealer with 2kg heroin in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Badiqul Islam, 55, of Char Kodalkati village, was apprehended from his home.

He along with the seized contraband was handed over to Chapainawabganj Sadar Police Station.

A narcotics case was filed in this connection.

ROUTES OF PROCESSIONS BY BNP, AL



A mega leap for transport

FROM PAGE 1

“These projects will bring revolutionary changes in the country’s transport and communication sector if effective operations with skilled manpower and modern technology can be ensured,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said operations of the new infrastructure, including tunnel and expressway, are complicated and the transport agencies do not have the capacity to handle them effectively.

“The capacity of the agencies has to be increased manifold ...,” he added.

Six projects are being implemented with either loans from the ADB, India, China, and Japan, and the expressway is being built with foreign investments. All seven projects, however, saw cost and deadline overruns.

BANGABANDHU TUNNEL

Work on the 9.1km Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel under the Karnaphuli is almost done.

“We are planning to open the tunnel in September ensuring all safety and security,” said Monjur Hossain, executive director of Bangladesh Bridge Authority, the implementing agency of the project.

Work on installing under-vehicle scanners is expected to be completed by this month, the last major works before the opening, he told this newspaper on July 13.

The BBA has already hired a contractor for running and maintaining the tunnel and fixed tolls for vehicles.

The tunnel, the first of its kind in South Asia, will ease communications between Dhaka, Chattogram and Cox’s Bazar.

After revisions, the cost of the project rose to Tk 10,690 crore from Tk 8,446.64 crore. The project is being completed just under two years behind schedule.

DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

A major part of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, will be opened in September, about 12 years after the project was launched.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the 11km section from the airport to Farmgate, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said on July 8.

Around 90 percent of the work for the airport to Farmgate section is done, said Project Director AHMS Akhtar.

The remaining 8.73km will be opened next year.

The project, implemented under Public Private Partnership model, is expected to ease congestion in Dhaka city.

Even though the PM inaugurated the construction work in 2011, the formal construction work began on January 1, 2020, when the 25 years of concession period for the contractor started.

In January 2011, the BBA signed a deal with a Thai company to build the expressway at a cost of Tk 8,703 crore. The deal was later revised and the cost rose to Tk 8,940 crore.

The government is to spend another Tk 4,917.57 crore on land acquisition and other work.

DHAKA-BHANGA-JASHORE RAIL LINE

The 169km rail line from Dhaka to Jashore via Padma Bridge will significantly improve rail connectivity with the southwest.

“We have a target to open the Dhaka-Bhanga section within September ...,” Project Director Afzal Hossain told this correspondent yesterday.

He said the Dhaka-Mawa section was 80 percent and the Mawa-Bhanga section was 95 percent complete until June.

The Prime Minister’s Office has asked Bangladesh Railway to complete the section by September 1, sources said.

Afzal said they would be able to open Mawa, Padma (Janjira), and Shibchar stations, out of the eight new stations between Dhaka and Bhangra, in September.

The rail line down to Jashore is expected to be built by June next year. The line will halve travel time from Dhaka.

KHULNA-MONGLA RAIL LINE

The 64.75km broad-gauge rail line between Khulna and Mongla is expected to give a big boost to internal and regional railway connectivity.

“We hope to complete the work by August and it would be ready for opening in September,” a project

official said.

BR is finishing the project almost a decade behind schedule.

Even though it was initiated in 2010, the physical work began around six years after approval, driving up the project cost to Tk 4,260.88 crore from Tk 1,721.39 crore.

The line will connect Mongla Port with the rest of the country and neighbouring nations boosting trade.

CHATTOTGRAM-COX’S BAZAR RAIL LINE

The dual-gauge line from Chattogram to Cox’s Bazar will connect the tourist town with the rest of the country by rail. Dhaka to Cox’s Bazar train service is being planned.

“We hope to open the 100km line by late September or early October,” Project Director Mofizur Rahman told this newspaper on July 10.

He, however, said three, out of nine new stations, may not be completed by then and that they expect all work to be done by December.

The government in 2010 had decided to lay a metre-gauge rail line from Chattogram to Gundhum in Cox’s Bazar spending Tk 1,852.35 crore. It later changed its mind and decided to have the dual-gauge line down to Cox’s Bazar town. The cost shot up to Tk 18,034.47 crore.

DHAKA METRO RAIL

The second phase—from Agargaon to Motiheel—of the country’s first metro rail will be opened in late October, Quader said on July 7, when the test runs on the line started.

Initially, Farmgate, Secretariat (Jatiya Press Club), and Motiheel stations will be opened.

The 21.26km Uttara to Kamalapur line is being implemented at a cost of Tk 33,472 crore.

HSIA 3RD TERMINAL

The terminal’s interior is now being built and, as of June, around 77 percent of the work is done.

The terminal, being implemented under a Tk 21,399 crore project, will be fully functional by 2024.

The authorities are opening the terminal partially in October this year.

Once opened, the airport will be able to deal with 20 million passengers a year from the existing 8 million.

Attack on Hero Alom, 12pc turnout mark

FROM PAGE 1

for fair polls.

Supporters of Arafat, wearing badges of “boat”, the AL’s electoral symbol, were seen inside many polling stations and their entrances to centres.

Police barred a few journalists from carrying out their duties inside polling booths in at least two centres.

Apart from these incidents, the election was by and large peaceful. Voting began at 8:00am and continued till 4:00pm.

Reporters and photojournalists of The Daily Star visited at least 64 out of total 124 polling stations.

The Dhaka-17 (Gulshan, Banani, Cantonment and Bhasantek) parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of AL lawmaker Akbar Hossain Pathan, an actor popularly known as Farooque, in May.

ATTACK ON HERO ALOM

Supporters of the AL candidate, wearing badges of “boat”, assaulted Hero Alom after forcing him to leave the polling centre at Banani Bidyaniketan School and College in Banani around 3:20pm.

Before heading towards the polling booths, the independent runner took selfies with some fans at the school playground. All of a sudden, 50 to 60 people wearing badges of “boat” came towards Hero Alom and said that it was not a place to shoot TikTok videos.

As the situation worsened, police escorted him towards the main gate of the polling centre.

As Alom was about to leave the place, the ruling party men shoved him from behind and beat him up.

Police said they detained four people.

Returning Officer Monir Hossain Khan later told reporters that Alom went to the polling centre with 50-60 people and the law enforcers took him out to maintain law and order.

“We will probe the incident after collecting footage and take action against those responsible,” he added.

Earlier, Alom expressed doubt about fair polls alleging that his agents were driven out of different polling centres.

‘DUMMY AGENTS’

At least 80 polling agents, other than those of the AL nominee, were unable to identify their candidates.

The Daily Star correspondents visited 65 polling centres yesterday.

Some “agents” claimed that their local

“elder brothers” hired them to discharge duties as polling agents.

Morium, a polling agent at booth-5 at the Banani Model School polling centre initially told this newspaper that she didn’t know which candidate she was representing.

After a brief pause, she said that she was working for “Mr Labu”.

As she was told that there was no candidate named Labu, Morium responded, “Labu brought me here.”

Later, the polling agent for the AL candidate asked Morium to say that she was representing Jatiya Party candidate Sikdar Anisur Rahman.

Like Morium, many other polling agents struggled to name the candidates they were working for when correspondents of this newspaper asked them.

After seeking help from the polling agents of the AL nominee, they claimed to be the agents of either the JP or the Jaker Party nominee.

At the polling centre at Manarat International School and College, a man was seen inside booth-2. He introduced himself as Humayun Kabir, a leader of Swechchhasebak League, the volunteer wing of the AL.

Enquired by this newspaper about what he was doing inside the booth, he kept mum.

A polling agent, who was sitting next to Humayun, claimed that the latter was an agent of Hero Alom.

Asked which candidate he was representing and what was the candidate’s electoral symbol, Humayun could not say.

He went out of the polling booth and asked another man whether he knew whose polling agent he was.

“You are an agent of Hero Alom,” said the man wearing a “boat” badge.

LOW TURNOUT

There was a significant difference between posh and poor neighbourhoods in terms of turnout.

Polling centres in Cantonment and Gulshan areas saw a thin presence of voters. Polling officials were seen waiting idly for voters.

At the four polling booths in Adamjee Cantonment College, only 182 out of total 11,257 votes were cast by 1:15pm.

A similar picture was seen at BAF Shaheen College, where only 100 out of 3,394 ballots were cast till 3:30pm.

However, at the polling centre at

Jamia Mohammadia Islamia Karail T&T Colony Madrasa, located at the heart of Karail slum, the voters’ presence was comparatively higher.

At least 1,001 votes out of total 10,147 were cast till noon.

FAKE VOTES

At least 100 people who are not voters of Dhaka-17 casted ballots at the Jamia Mohammadia Islamia Karail T&T Colony Madrasa polling centre, a correspondent of this paper saw. They were seen with a list of voters who had not cast their ballots.

During their two-hour stay towards the end of voting at the centre, the correspondent also saw the same persons voting several times.

Many also took photos of their casting fake votes for “boat”.

The Daily Star found a large number of AL supporters gathering in front of the polling centres.

EC’S REACTION

Election Commissioner Md Alamgir yesterday termed the attack on Hero Alom “unfortunate and unexpected”.

Briefing reporters at the EC after the by-election, he said the voting was free, fair, and peaceful.

“The by-election took place in 124 polling centres. You can’t say that the by-election was not free and fair only by analysing the incident that occurred in one centre,” he added.

‘WON’T RUN AGAIN’

Speaking at a press conference at his home in the capital, Alom said he won’t take part in any election under the incumbent government.

“If the polling environment turns out to be like this, if the candidates are attacked, then there is no need to participate in any upcoming elections,” he said after returning home from hospital.

He said the attack on an independent candidate has proved that no fair election can be held under the incumbent government.

He also alleged rigging of votes, but didn’t provide details.

‘ATTACK UNACCEPTABLE’

AL candidate Arafat said, “I think it [the attack] is very much unacceptable. I think a quarter tried to make the election controversial. I urge the Election Commission and the law enforcement agencies to bring the attackers, no matter who they are, to book following a fair investigation.”