



With sacks of scrap materials beside them, shopkeepers sit on stools on a makeshift bamboo platform set up over pointed iron rod extensions of an under-construction road in Kotwali area of Wise Ghat yesterday. Due to the ongoing work, many traders in the area have set up such platforms to walk. However, they continue to use those for keeping sacks and sitting purposes. The structures may collapse as they are not strong enough to endure such heavy weight for prolonged hours.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

JONNY'S CUSTODIAL DEATH

10 years on, justice remains elusive

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

It has been 10 years since the brutal custodial torture and death of Ishtiaque Hossain Jonny, a garment-waste trader from Dhaka's Mirpur, and his family is still waiting for ultimate justice.

The High Court, however, could not start hearing of the appeals yet due to lack of paper book, which contains all the details of a case, including trial proceedings, statements, evidence, verdicts and other documents, that are necessary for the court for hearing and disposing of an appeal.

Meanwhile, Jonny's family members have been suffering emotionally and financially, as they are yet to get any compensation from the convicted accused.

The trial court had directed three convicted accused 40 months ago to give Jonny's family Tk 6 lakh as compensation, but the HC later issued a stay order to this effect in 2021.

A group of 25-26 police officers — including then sub-inspector of Pallabi

Police Station Zahidur Rahman — raided a house during a wedding ceremony at Pallabi's Irani camp and picked up 28-year-old Jonny and his brother Imtiaz Hossain Rocky on February 8, 2014.

Informants Sumon and Russell had called the police personnel after Jonny slapped Sumon for stalking and harassing women at the programme. Police brutally tortured the brothers at the station, according to the case statement.



After Jonny fell sick the next day, he was admitted to a local clinic. Later, he was shifted to Suhrawardy hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

On August 8, 2014, Rocky filed a case with the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka.

On September 9, 2020, a Dhaka court sentenced three former officers of Pallabi Police Station — sub-inspector Zahidur, and assistant sub-inspectors Qamruzzaman Mintu and Rashedul Islam — to life imprisonment, and two others — Sumon and Russell — to seven years in jail.

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Govt not committed to protecting sovereignty

Alleges Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday accused the government of failing to protect the country's sovereignty, saying people are facing extreme insecurity along the Myanmar border.

"No one is safe in the border areas as lives are being lost to mortar shelling. The Awami League government is not committed to protecting the country's sovereignty," Rizvi said at a press conference at the party's Navapaltn central office.

Rizvi said a "bloody game" was unfolding along Bangladesh's borders, leaving lives and the country's land unprotected.

"But the government is silent," he claimed. The BNP leader also claimed the border areas were secured and people were safe during the regimes of party founder Ziaur Rahman and party chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"BNP's priority is people's interests, not illegitimate power. BNP has never compromised national interests," he said.

He claimed law enforcers arrested more than 25,671 leaders and activists in 792 cases from October 28 last year until Wednesday.

BIRTH AND DEATH REGISTRATION SERVER

DSCC at odds with registrar general

DIPAN NANDY

Dhaka South City Corporation has introduced a new server for birth registrations, violating the existing law and rules governing the process.

According to the Birth and Death Registration Act 2004, local government bodies can register births and deaths, and issue certificates under the authority of the Registrar General.

As per Section 19(2) of the Birth and Death Registration Rules 2018, Registrar General has jurisdiction over creating, maintaining, and storing registration information through a central database software.

DSCC's initiative to introduce its own server aims to retain the revenue generated from birth registration fees, bypassing the established procedure that directs the funds to the Registrar General's authority, thereby resulting in a financial loss for the government.

Since the server launched on October 4 last year, DSCC has issued 73,091 birth registration certificates and held onto the Tk 50 fee for each certificate issued within its treasury, instead of forwarding it to the Registrar General's office.

A dispute ensued between DSCC and the Registrar General's office in June last year, over a disagreement regarding revenue distribution from birth registrations, leading

to a four-month suspension of the registration process for Dhaka south residents.

Amid the conflict, DSCC introduced the server to resume birth registration process.

The then-registrar general Rashedul Hasan, before retiring in December last year, sent a letter of

A new complication arose when birth registrations provided by DSCC were found to be ineffective for obtaining crucial documents such as NIDs, passports, driving licenses, marriage registrations, land registrations, and appointments from government and autonomous institutions, as DSCC has no memorandum of understanding with these entities.

objection in this connection to the local government division against DSCC on October 19 last year.

"The registration of death and birth is under the central jurisdiction of the Registrar General's office. Therefore, any work related to it on DSCC's

server is a violation of the law and rules governing the process," said Rashedul in the letter.

However, Mizanur Rahman, chief executive officer of DSCC, said, "We have launched the registration process on our server to reduce citizens' sufferings. It was difficult to give input to the common server of the Registrar General."

Contacted, Rashedul said, "We are working with one of the best servers. Sometimes, due to excess pressure, it can slow down. But no one else had any problems. Why would DSCC only have this problem?"

Meanwhile, a new complication arose when birth registrations provided by DSCC were found to be ineffective for obtaining crucial documents such as National Identification cards, passports, driving licenses, marriage registrations, land registrations, and appointments from government and autonomous institutions, as DSCC has no memorandum of understanding with these entities.

Complaints are already piling up as residents are not getting any other service using the birth registrations done through its server.

The Department of Passport and Immigration returned the applications, as the birth registrations were not found on the integrated server.

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SAGIRA MURDER Verdict deferred until Feb 20

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday deferred until February 20 to deliver



the judgement in the Sagira Morshed murder case filed 34 years ago.

Judge Mohammad Ali Hussain of the Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka set the date as the judgement is yet to be prepared, said a court staffer.

On January 25, the court set yesterday to deliver the verdict after closing arguments in the case.

The five accused are — Sagira Morshed's brother-in-law Hasan Ali Chowdhury, his wife Sayedatul Mahmuda alias Shahin, brother-in-law (wife's brother) Anas Mahmud alias Rezwana, hired killer Maruf Reza and one Montu.

A total of 17 prosecution witnesses gave their statements before the court.

On July 25, 1989, Sagira, 34, was going to Viqarunnisa Noon School and College on the capital's Bailey Road by a rickshaw to pick up her daughter Saharat.

However, muggers shot and killed her when she reached the school.

Her husband Abdus Salam Chowdhury filed a murder case against unknown people with Ramna Police Station the same day.

MURSHEDY GULSHAN HOME

ACC probe finds abuse of power and forgery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission in a probe has found fraudulence, forgery and abuse of powers over the Gulshan house and plot of Awami League lawmaker Abdus Salam Murshedy.

Eleven people — including former chairmen of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) Humayun Khadem and M Azizul Haque — were involved in those activities, according to the ACC's inquiry report submitted before the High Court yesterday in compliance with its order.

The other persons, whose names have been included in the probe, are Mir Mohammad Hasan

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Tesla of Bangla!

Says Nasrul Hamid on battery-run 3-wheelers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While the entire world keeps rhapsodising about the electric cars of Tesla, State Minister for Power and Energy Nasrul Hamid yesterday presented a rather amusing alternative for Tesla enthusiasts in the country.

The state minister in parliament termed the battery-run three-wheeler autorickshaws the "Tesla of Bangla".

Tesla is a US company involved in car manufacturing and energy, best known for its electric cars. The company is also known for specialising in solar panels and lithium-ion battery energy storage.

Comparing autorickshaws with Tesla cars, Nasrul said, "These three-wheeler electric vehicles are cost-effective and environment-friendly. The

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Won't tolerate irregularities

Says health minister on private medical colleges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen yesterday said no irregularities will be tolerated regarding admissions to private medical colleges in the country.

He also said the admission process at six private medical colleges has remained suspended as they are not suitable for admitting students.

The minister made the remarks at a press conference at the capital's Sheikh Hasina National Burn and Plastic Surgery Institute.

He said a law has been passed for private medical colleges to ensure the quality of education.

The six medical colleges whose admission process has remained suspended are Aichi Medical College (Dhaka), Northern International

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GOODS-LADEN TRUCKS 32 arrested over extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion yesterday claimed to have detained 32 people from Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Gazipur in the last two days for extorting money from goods-laden trucks.

The move came after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, on Monday, directed the authorities to take stern action against extortionists on the highways, identifying them as major contributors to the price hike of essential commodities.

Separate teams of Rab-1 carried out the drive from 10:00pm on Wednesday, said Lt Col Muhammad Mostaq Ahmad, commanding officer of Rab-1.

Over Tk 1 lakh of the extorted money, six torch lights used to stop vehicles, 29 extortion collection receipts, and 25 mobile phones were seized from their possession, he added.

Using laser lights, sticks, and signals, they intercepted vehicles on the highways in Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Gazipur, unlawfully collecting extortion fees from drivers.

Each truck and cargo vehicle was charged Tk 200-300. In some places, they even issued receipts for the extortion money. If drivers resisted, they resorted to vehicle vandalism and assaults on driver-helpers, he added.

The Rab official said the drive was conducted to halt the extortion of vegetable-laden vehicles, as prices of kitchen market items have triggered discontent amongst people.

On February 4, Rab arrested 51 people from different areas of the capital for extorting money from goods-laden trucks.



Chattogram City Corporation conducted a drive in New Market and Station Road areas of the port city yesterday to remove illegal shops to clear the roads and footpaths. Meanwhile, Chattogram Footpath Hawkers Association brought out a procession, saying they should be rehabilitated first before eviction as livelihoods of around 5,000 people will be at stake due to the drives.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN