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Shibir now out into the open at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After around three and a half decades, Islami Chhatra Shibir has come out on Dhaka University campus by revealing the identities of its two top leaders, touching off public debate online and offline.

Soon after a meeting between student organisations and the university administration on Saturday, Shadik Kayem said he is the president of Shibir's DU unit. He is a political science student of 2016-17 academic session.

A day after the disclosure of the DU president's identity, SM Farhad's came to light on Sunday night. A student of the 2017-18 academic session at the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, he is the general secretary of DU unit Shibir.

He was a resident student of Kabi Jasimuddin Hall.

Both Shadik and Farhad got enrolled at DU after completing Alim from Baitush Sharaf Adarsh Kamil Madrasa in Chattogram.

Shadik Kayem, who was actively involved in the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, said they divulged their identities in line with a decision of the organisation.

"In the last 15 and a half years, the fascist government forced us to stay underground. We were portrayed as monsters. We want to get rid of it," Shadik told The Daily Star.

"Everyone will do their politics, everyone will enjoy the freedom of expression, nothing will be imposed on anyone – that is what we want," he said.

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Construction of the TT Para underpass, part of the Padma Rail Link project, is progressing, albeit slowly since the recent student-led uprising that toppled the Hasina regime. The photo was taken near Kamalapur in the capital yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Rejoinder, our reply

Chowdhury Nafeez Sarafat has issued a rejoinder in response to a Star report titled "Nafeez Sarafat manipulated stock market", published on September 2 based on the investigation report by the Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The rejoinder said the report was made based on improper investigation and inaccurate information, which is not consistent with the principles of journalism.

The rejoinder reads that RACE Asset Management is run by its managing director and chief executive officer Hasan Taher Imam, who holds 75 percent shares of the company.

Earlier this year, it was Sarafat who identified potential irregularities within the company and acting in good faith filed formal complaints to the Bangladesh Security Exchange Commission. His actions prompted an investigation into Hasan Taher Imam and RACE Asset Management.

Sarafat, acting on his own initiative, also filed a case with the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, seeking enforced compliance measures and an impartial audit of the company. Hence, using Sarafat's

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Their brutality unimaginable

Video shows men singing, dancing around youth they murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Twenty-year-old Sharmin Akter was recovering after losing her 24-year-old husband Md Shahadat Hossain, who was found murdered a month ago, but she spiralled once again as a heartbreaking video surfaced of the last moments of his life.

The 20-second video from August 14 in Chattogram showed the limp body of a young man tied to two poles.

A crowd of young men were singing a local song and dancing around him, seemingly taking pleasure in a life slipping away before their eyes.

More than a month after the ruthless killing, the incident came to the fore after the video was posted on Facebook on Saturday.

The victim was identified as Shahadat, 24, a resident of the BRTC area's Boiler Colony under Kotwali Police Station in Chattogram. Originally from Nadra village in Noakhali's Sonaimuri upazila, he worked as a day labourer in the BRTC fruits market, said his family members.

The location of the assault was confirmed by police to be under the Akhtaruzzaman flyover near the Sholoshahar No 2 Gate area in the port city.

Police found Shahadat unconscious with multiple injuries in the Probortak area of the port city on the night of August 14. He was taken to Chattogram Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

The following day, Shahadat's uncle, Md Harun, filed a case with the Panchlaish Police Station, naming unknown persons as suspects. The motive for the murder or any prior disputes were not mentioned in the report.

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Metro line-5 proposal to be re-evaluated

Interim govt takes its first step to review mega projects

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

For the first time, a proposal for a mega project will be sent back for further review as the interim government intends to re-evaluate all large projects to assess their usefulness carefully.

According to officials at the Planning Commission, the MRT Line-5 project proposal is likely to be sent back to the metro rail authority within a day or two. The project is awaiting final approval from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).

On Sunday, the Planning Commission placed the MRT Line-5 proposal before Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud, who gave his consent for further review.

"Now we will send the proposal back to the metro rail authority. It could be sent tomorrow [today]," a Planning Commission official, wishing to remain unnamed, told this newspaper yesterday.

The interim government has decided against initiating new mega projects and to review ones under the Annual Development Programme (ADP). The planning adviser has given a directive to evaluate mega projects to assess whether they should be executed, especially the new ones.

The 17.20km Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-5 (Southern Route) is planned to be built between Gabtoli and Dasherbandi at a cost of Tk 54,618 crore (approximately \$5.1 billion), with funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and South Korea.

During the immediate past

The 17.20km Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-5 (Southern Route) is planned to be built between Gabtoli and Dasherbandi at a cost of Tk 54,618 crore (approximately \$5.1 billion)

Awami League government, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing and operating agency of metro rail, sent the project proposal to the planning ministry before its approval at the Ecneec.

In April, a Project Evaluation Committee meeting evaluated the project.

According to the project

documents, the MRT Line-5 will be built from Gabtoli to Dasherbandi via Kalyanpur, Shyamoli, Asad Gate, Russell Square, Karwan Bazar, Hatirjheel, Tejgaon, and Aftabnagar. There will be 11 underground and four elevated stations. The tunnel section will be between Gabtoli and Aftabnagar, while the elevated portion will be from Aftabnagar to Dasherbandi. A feasibility study on the project has already been completed with ADB financing. The deadline for the project is 2030.

According to the preliminary commitment, ADB will provide \$3 billion and South Korea \$1.5 billion in financing for the project.

In July 2013, the AL government formed the state-run company DMTCL to build and operate metro rail. The company adopted a time-bound action plan to build a 140-km metro rail network, comprising six lines, in and around Dhaka by 2030 to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution.

The country's first metro rail line, also known as MRT Line-6, is now fully operational on the Uttara to Motijheel route, significantly reducing travel time in a major part of the city. Its extended part from Motijheel to Kamalapur is expected to be opened by June next year.

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37 Khulna rivers in dire straits

Finds Bela study

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The rivers of Khulna division are in a poor state, primarily due to reduced water flow from upstream and inadequate management of siltation.

Many rivers lack water flow and encroachment on them continues.

A recent study by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) identified that out of 138 rivers in the division, 37 are now in a state of critical distress. This alarming information was shared during a discussion on river conservation held yesterday at a hotel in Khulna city.

The endangered rivers are Soilmari, Chunkuri, Rupsa, Bhadra, Mayur, Hori, Hamkura, Pasur, Mukteshwari, Harihar, Ichamati, Garai, Kaliganga, Bhairab, Kapotaksha, Madhumati, Navganga, Chitra, Kumar, Atarobanki, Payala, Mathabhangha, Baleshwar, Bhola, Marihap, Kakshial, Mongla-Ghsiaakhali Channel, Kholpetua, Ghangrai, Shibshah, Teligati, Guachapa, Hariyabhangha, Guakhali, Salta, Labanyabati, and Chuna.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, Khulna divisional coordinator of Bela, presented the key findings, noting that 20 of the rivers in distress were not flowing and the Hamkura river was about to disappear.

Encroachment, unplanned infrastructure development, siltation, industrial pollution, and the construction of barriers like bridges and sluice gates are the main reasons for their poor state.

He also cited that the establishment of Carew & Co (Bangladesh) Ltd sugar mill in 1938 severed the connection between the Mathabhangha and Bhairab rivers, leading to the latter's health to slide. The construction of narrow railway bridges in 1861 also disrupted river systems, impacting the Kumar, Navaganga, Chitra, and Bhairab rivers.

After 1950, around 4,000km of embankment, 782 sluice gates, and 92 polders were constructed. Of them, 1,556km of dam, 92 sluice gates, and 37 polders were built in the south-western region.

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POST-COUP MYANMAR India invites anti-junta forces to Delhi

REUTERS

India has invited political and military opponents of Myanmar's ruling junta to attend a seminar in New Delhi, sources said, a significant move by the South Asian power that has maintained ties with the top generals shunned by Western nations.

A civil war in Myanmar since its military unseated an elected civilian government in a February 2021 coup now risks destabilising India's 1,650-km (1,025-mile) border with Myanmar, and some of its key infrastructure projects there.

A leader of an armed group and two sources with direct knowledge of the issue said the parallel National Unity Government (NUG) and ethnic minority rebels from the states of Chin, Rakhine and Kachin bordering India had been invited to a seminar in mid-November.

It was not immediately clear what the seminar would seek to achieve or why India has made the move.

The event would be hosted by the government-funded Indian Council

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A city corporation worker sprays mosquito repellents using a fogger in the capital's East Tejuri Bazar yesterday afternoon. The city has seen a sharp rise in dengue cases over the last few weeks. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Oldest human DNA from South Africa decoded

AFP, Johannesburg

Researchers have reconstructed the oldest human genomes ever found in South Africa from two people who lived around 10,000 years ago, allowing a better understanding of how the region was populated, an author of the study said Sunday.

The genetic sequences were from a man and a woman whose remains were found at a rock shelter near the southern coastal town of George, about 370 kilometres east of Cape Town, said University of Cape Town (UCT) biological anthropology Professor Victoria Gibbon.

They were among 13 sequences reconstructed from people whose remains were found at the Oakhurst shelter and lived 1,300-10,000 years ago. Prior to these discoveries, the oldest genomes reconstructed from the region dated back around 2,000 years.

A surprise finding from the Oakhurst study was that the oldest genomes were genetically similar to those from San and Khoekhoe groups living in the same region today, UCT said in a statement.