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ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং সেবা প্রদানে 'ইসলামী ব্যাংকিং কর্মী' পূর্বালী ব্যাংকের প্রায় সকল শাখা এবং উপশাখায়

PARVEZ MURDER
Two including prime accused arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers yesterday arrested two youths, including the prime accused, in connection with the murder of Jahidul Islam Parvez, a student of Primeasia University.

The prime accused, Meheraj Islam, 20, was arrested by Rab from Gaibandha, while another accused, Mahathir Hasan, 20, was arrested by a team of Banani police from Chattogram, said Banani Police Station Officer-in-Charge Russel Sarwar.

"A team of Banani police went to Chattogram and arrested Mahathir. Efforts are underway to arrest the other accused and those involved in the incident," the OC said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

SC scraps graft case against Yunus, six others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday dismissed the proceedings of a corruption case against Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, chairman of Grameen Telecom, and six other officials.

A four member bench, led by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, delivered the verdict after allowing an appeal, filed by Yunus and the six others, challenging a High Court order that had upheld their indictment in the case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

The full text of the Supreme Court's verdict, which will provide detailed reasoning, is yet to be released.

The six Grameen Telecom officials are Managing Director Nazmul Islam and Directors Ashraful Hassan, Naznin Sultana, Md Shahjahan, Nurjahan Begum, and SM Huzzatul Islam Latifee.

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On the eve of the 12th anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy, relatives of victims and labour organisation leaders light candles at the site in memory of those who lost their lives. Inset, a file photo of rescuers working at the site after the tragedy took place in Savar on April 24, 2013.

PHOTO: AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH

12 YEARS OF RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY



**Ensure long-term support for survivors
Speakers tell event**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Survivors of Rana Plaza tragedy, alongside rights activists and legal experts, yesterday criticised the slow pace of trial proceedings, blaming past political interference and lack of urgency.

Speaking at a discussion titled "Rana Plaza Bhaban Dhwongsho: Bicharer Opekkhay Ek Jug" at Jatiya Press Club, Abul Kalam Khan, additional public prosecutor of Dhaka district, alleged that the previous government had protected those responsible.

"For years, the case made little progress. Only 93 witnesses testified in eight years. Many of the accused, including the building owner, were granted bail," he said.

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Victims still await justice as trials drag on

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

Twelve years have passed since the Rana Plaza collapse, yet the trials of two related cases remain incomplete at a Dhaka court, mainly due to the repeated absence of prosecution witnesses.

Frustrated by the prolonged delay, survivors and victims' families said they will not be able to see justice in their lifetime.

At least 1,136 people, mostly garment workers, were killed and over 2,500 were injured when the nine storey building collapsed in Savar on April 24, 2013, marking the deadliest garment factory disaster in history.

In 2016, the murder trial against 41 accused, including building owner Sohel Rana, began. However, proceedings in another case -- filed for violating building codes -- have not yet started.

On July 18, 2016, the Dhaka district and sessions judge's court framed charges against the accused in the murder case. Since then, only 94 of the 594 prosecution witnesses have testified, according to the prosecution.

The court recorded statements of witness Nuruzzaman Dolon, former

secretary of Rana Plaza Owners' Association, on February 12 this year. Since then, no witnesses have testified in the court.

On April 15, the court issued non-bailable arrest warrants against 15 witnesses and set May 15 as the next date for witness statements.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Public Prosecutor Md Iqbal Hossain said witnesses are now being summoned to testify properly, and non-bailable arrest warrants are being issued against those who fail to appear.

"We are taking steps to finish the trial without delay," he said, adding, "Some witnesses testified but did not give statements properly before the court. We declared them hostile," he said.

A day after the incident, Wali Ashraf Khan, sub-inspector of Savar Police Station, filed the murder case against Sohel Rana, also former Jubo League leader, and several others.

On May 24, 2015, CID's Senior Assistant Superintendent Bijay Krishna Kar pressed charges against Sohel Rana, his parents Abdul Khaleque and Morjina, and 38 others.

Of the 41 accused, only Sohel Rana

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The capital's Jirani canal in Khilgaon Nandipara has long been a victim of encroachment and pollution. The waterbody now resembles a drain due to indifference of the authorities concerned.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Student bodies gear up for Jucsu polls

Concerns remain over fairness, timely execution

SAKIB AHMED



Polls postponed from original Feb 1 schedule

Elections set to be held by May 21

Schedule due end of April

Students want VC removed as Jucsu president

Voter list, code of conduct in progress

hall union charters.

On February 7, the vice chancellor issued a notice confirming elections would be held no later than May 21, with the schedule to be published in the last week of April.

Prapti Taposi, organiser of Jahangirnagar Bachao Andolon, said her coalition is in talks with various cultural and social bodies. "We're skeptical," she said. "There are still faculty members loyal to the ousted regime..."

Jatiyatabadi Chhatri Dal (JCD) echoed the concern, while projecting confidence in their ground work. "We've won Jucsu elections before. Students trust us," said Jahir Uddin Babor, convener of JU JCD.

However, he questioned the administration's impartiality, noting that BCL members involved in past attacks

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Timely polls under interim govt doubtful
Says Mirza Abbas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



BNP standing committee member Mirza Abbas yesterday expressed doubts over the possibility of the upcoming national election being held on time.

Addressing a discussion organised by Ganatantra Forum at Jatiya Press Club, he alleged that several individuals close to the chief adviser are trying to disrupt the electoral process.

Mirza Abbas alleged that both government officials and members of the advisory council were attempting to misguide the CA and steer him away from the right path.

"This is my personal opinion, not the party's stance... There's a saying in English: 'Hope for the best, think for the worst.' I hope for something good, but thinking of the bad, it seems like perhaps they won't hold the election very soon..." said the BNP leader.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Hills more peaceful than before
Says home adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



The Chittagong Hill Tracts are now more peaceful than before, said Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury yesterday.

He made the remarks while speaking to reporters at the Chattogram Circuit House after a closed-door views exchange meeting with senior officials of the Chattogram Range Police, Chattogram Metropolitan Police, and representatives from the army, navy, and Border Guard Bangladesh.

Regarding the recent abduction of five Chittagong University students in the hill tracts, the adviser said such incidents are not unique to the region.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 7

Do not block roads with demos: DMP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police has urged all groups and individuals to refrain from blocking roads during demonstrations, saying such actions are worsening traffic congestion and causing immense public suffering.

In a statement yesterday, DMP Deputy Commissioner (Media and Public Relations) Talebir Rahman said different groups and vested quarters have recently been blocking roads at will in the name of pressing demands or staging protests, causing severe traffic congestion and immense suffering to commuters, including students and office-goers.

Such road blockades are also causing difficulties for outbound air passengers and transportation of critically ill patients, said the statement.