

Latif Siddique gets HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to former jute and textile minister Abdul Latif Siddique and journalist Manjur Alam Panna in a case filed under the Anti-terrorism Act.



The HC bench of Justice ASM Abdul Mobin and Justice Md Sagir Hossain passed the order following two separate petitions.

There is no legal bar for Latif Siddique and Manjurul Alam to get released from jail if the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court does not stay the HC's bail, their lawyer ZI Khan Panna told The Daily Star.

After the order, the lawyer said the HC granted bail to his clients on the ground that they were not involved in any terrorist act and the allegations brought against them are false.

Meanwhile, Latif Siddique's brother Abdul Quader Siddique expressed satisfaction at the HC order.

On August 29, a Dhaka court ordered police to send Abdul Latif and 17 others to jail in the case filed by SI Amirul Islam of Shahbagh Police Station.

DNCC removes 1.25 lakh illegal banners in a month



UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka North City Corporation has removed a total of 1,25,000 illegal banners and festoons across the city over the past month.

DNCC Administrator Mohammad Ejaz disclosed this following a review meeting at the city corporation headquarters yesterday.

During the meeting, officials presented detailed statistics from the campaign conducted across 52 wards in DNCC's 10 zones.

According to the report, Zone-3 saw the highest number of removals at 29,441, followed by Zone-2 with nearly 25,000, Zone-4 with 18,000, Zone-5 with 12,000, and Zone-9 with around 11,000 banners and festoons cleared.

Since last month, DNCC has designated nearly 30 locations across the city for free poster placements, after which a coordinated operation to remove illegally installed banners, posters, and festoons was launched.

The campaign covered all 52 wards under the 10 DNCC zones and will continue as part of the city's ongoing cleanliness efforts.

PHULBARI IN KURIGRAM

8yrs on, locals still cut off after dam collapse

S DILIP ROY

For the last eight years, residents of Banglabazar village in Barovita Union of Phulbari upazila, Kurigram, have been struggling to move in and out of their area after a flood in 2017 washed away part of an earthen dam.

The flood destroyed about 200 metres of the dam, leaving a deep crater that fills with water every monsoon. Since then, villagers have been using banana rafts to cross from July to mid-January each year.

Majibur Rahman, 65, said, "After the flood washed away the dam, we have been living like people stranded on an island. During the rainy season, we risk our lives crossing the water on banana rafts."

Monser Ali, 55, said around 55 children from the village go to school, and some have fallen into the water while trying to board the rafts. "The alternative route is 4-5 kilometres longer. If the dam or a



small bridge could be built, our sufferings would ease."

Barovita UP Chairman Ataur Rahman Mintu said repairing the dam would require a large budget. "We are trying to have the repair included in this fiscal year."

Kurigram Water Development Board

Executive Engineer Rakibul Hasan said the dam had long been declared abandoned, so no funds could be allocated for its repair. "The local administration and public representatives should find alternative measures to solve the issue," he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Once feared extinct, river terrapin returns to Sundarbans

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

Once thought to be lost forever, the critically endangered Batagur baska, or northern river terrapin, is slowly making a comeback in the Sundarbans, thanks to years of conservation and breeding efforts.

Decades of relentless hunting, along with habitat loss and pollution, had driven this freshwater turtle species to the brink of extinction.

The Batagur baska, native to Southeast

Asia, is among the rarest turtle species in the world. Adult females can weigh up to 27 kilogrammes, while males are smaller, usually around 12 to 14 kilogrammes. Males can be identified by their darker shells and head markings of yellow, red, and black during the breeding season.

The species once thrived across the river deltas of the Sundarbans, stretching to Myanmar, Thailand, and Malaysia. However, widespread poaching, sandbank encroachment, harmful fishing nets, and

river pollution drastically reduced their numbers, leading many experts to fear the turtle had disappeared entirely around 2000.

In 2008, a team of wildlife biologists discovered eight surviving Batagur baska individuals – four males and four females – in ponds in Noakhali and Barishal.

The Forest Department transferred them to Bhawal National Park in Gazipur, where a small-scale breeding programme

he said.

Under the programme, the eggs are carefully buried under sand in special incubation chambers, and once the young turtles emerge, they are reared in water tanks under close observation. Gradually, as they grow and become acclimatised to natural conditions, they are released into semi-wild enclosures.

Between 2017 and 2025, a total of 106 young turtles has been released into the ponds and creeks within the Sundarbans.

At present, Karamjal hosts 457 Batagur baska turtles, including 11 identified males and four females. Forest officials have created sandy enclosures within the centre to ensure safe nesting areas for the adults.

To understand their survival and adaptation, researchers have attached satellite transmitters to 21 male turtles before releasing them into various rivers.

The breeding programme, now managed jointly by the Forest Department, Prokriti O Jibon Foundation, and Austria's Vienna Zoo, with past support from the Turtle Survival Alliance in the United States, has focused on improving breeding techniques, temperature control for incubation, and a suitable diet for hatchlings.

"This is a milestone in Bangladesh's conservation history. It proves that with proper planning and scientific commitment, even a nearly extinct species can be brought back," said Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, divisional forest officer of the East Sundarbans Division.

"Our next goal is to restore their natural habitats, stop poaching, and raise awareness among local communities so these turtles can once again thrive in the wild."



EMPLOYMENT IN MALAYSIA

ACC to sue 11 for embezzling Tk 525.22cr

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has decided to file separate cases against 11 individuals on charges of embezzling and laundering Tk 525.22 crore collected from 3,331 job seekers for employment in Malaysia, confirmed ACC Director General Md Akhter Hossain yesterday.

The accused are: Ruhul Amin, owner of M/s Amin Tours and Travels; Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury, chairman, and Shahana Ferdous, managing director of Merit Trade International Ltd; Shamim Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, owner of Sadia International; Iqbal Hossain, chairman, and Badruddoza Chowdhury, managing director of Imperial Resource Ltd; Moniruzzaman, chairman, and Alamgir Kabir, managing director of RRC Human Resource Service Ltd; and Abdullah Shahed, former managing director, Zainal Abedin, director, and Shamsher Ahmed, director of Thanex International Ltd.

According to case details, they charged up to five times the official rate of Tk 78,990 per worker.

During the process, they violated the registration conditions set by the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), and illegally conducted recruitment operations.

1,500kg of jatka seized in Amtali



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A joint team seized 1,500 kilogrammes of jatka (young hilsa) worth around Tk 9 lakh from three passenger buses on the Amtali-Kuakata regional highway yesterday noon.

The confiscated fish was later distributed among local orphanages and underprivileged families.

According to the Amtali upazila joint forces, the jatka was being transported to Dhaka from Kuakata in three buses – Bhai Bhai, Sohel, and Subha-Surha Paribahan.

Acting on a tip-off, a team led by Lt Nakib Nasrullah, commander of the BN detachment and chief of the Amtali upazila joint contingent, along with members of the navy, police, and senior fisheries officer, conducted a drive in the Churikata area and seized the fish from the luggage compartments of the buses.

100 structures knocked down in Gazipur

UNB, Gazipur

Around 100 illegal establishments were destroyed in the Joydebpur Railway Junction area in Gazipur yesterday.

A mobile court conducted the eviction drive in the area in the afternoon.

A number of shops – including fruit, tea shops and dwelling houses – were removed during the drive. Gazipur Metropolitan Police, Railway Police and City Corporation members were present during the drive.



Three completely transfixed children play a game of marbles in the Chandmari area of Barishal, sharing in the joy of this popular and enduring pastime. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS