

Schoolboy makes a narrow escape from kidnappers

Body of abducted youth recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushita*

A schoolboy yesterday made an escape ten minutes after he was kidnapped in Kushtia, while police in the adjacent district of Jhenidah found the dead body of a young man abducted last Sunday.

In the first incident, a gang of alleged kidnappers picked up Ramjan Ahmed alias Ali, a student of class three of Batikamara Government Primary School, into a microbus from Masjid crossroads in Kumarkhali upazila around noon. Ali, son of Saker Ali of Tebaria, was on his way home after school, family sources said.

Police quoting witnesses said the kid jumped down from the Kushtia-bound microbus, which was then standing on the highway near the municipal fire service station. The boy ran across the road crying for help.

Seeing locals rushing to help, the witnesses said, one of the kidnappers, who was talking on his cellphone, quickly climbed back into the microbus and fled the scene.

Locals took Ali to his school. The schoolteachers called his parents and handed him over to them.

In the second case, Jhenidah police yesterday recovered the body of Ziaul Haq Zia, 25, from Buri Bhairab river.

There were torture marks all over the body and police assume he might

JCD LEADER'S THREAT
Meghna Oil Co
halts
operation
for 5 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *N'ganj*

Meghna Petroleum Company suspended its operation at Fatulla in Narayangon for five hours yesterday after a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader allegedly threatened the state owned oil company staff to stop their work there.

Abdur Rashid, depot-in-charge of the company, alleged Riad Chowdhury, owner of Fatulla Oil Agency and leader of local JCD, demanded extra kerosene for his agency.

"Riad is entitled to get 9,000 ltrs of kerosene as per allocation rule, but he asked for 18,000 ltrs," Rashid said.

Being refused, the JCD leader got furious and said no staff at the depot would be allowed to work if his demand went unmet.

Employees at the state owned oil company stopped their work at about 8:00am following the threat and resumed their operation at 1:00pm only after Fatullah Police Station assured of their safety.

Brushing aside the allegation, Riad said, "I did not threaten them. I am entitled to get 18,000 ltrs of kerosene, but the depot-in-charge refused to supply my allocation."

"He sold the kerosene reducing my allocation. As I opposed his corruption, he brought the charge against me," he added.

Seven-day

FROM PAGE 1 followed by a weekly holiday on April 30 (Friday) and an official holiday on May Day (Saturday). With just one working day (May 2) in between, government offices and most private offices would remain closed on May 3 and 4 on account of Eid-e-Miladunnabi and Buddha Purnima.

Traders and businesspeople fear the prolonged holiday will make the economy suffer heavily in terms of lost business.

Congress catches up

FROM PAGE 12 voting, Reuters reports.

"This is not bad news," said Prakash Jaydekar, a BJP spokesman, referring to TV exit polls.

"These were phases where we were supposed to lose some seats," he said of the first three stages.

India's main political foes have shifted base to the desert state of Rajasthan in the hope that 25 parliamentary seats up for grabs there can avert a hung parliament, AFP adds.

Opposition Congress leader Sonia Gandhi toured the northern state's Dausa constituency yesterday, a day after Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee ended the first leg of his tour of Rajasthan with a call against fractured voting in India's ongoing election that began April 20.

"Your vote is valuable and don't fritter it away," Vajpayee said in Churu town.

Voting in Rajasthan and 58 more constituencies across six other states on the fourth leg of the elections is scheduled for May 5.

The 57-year-old Gandhi, emboldened by exit polls which predicted her Congress party faring

Lawyer fined for contempt of court

UNB, *Pirojpur*

A magistrate's court in Pirojpur yesterday fined a lawyer for contempt of court.

Magistrate Anupam Kumar Barua slapped Tk 100 fine or three days' imprisonment on Advocate Farooq Sarder, general secretary of Pirojpur District Bar Association, for failing to comply with an order to appear before the court.

The court ordered police to investigate a dowry case moved by the lawyer. Farooq misbehaved with the court saying the magistrate had earlier summoned an accused in a similar case, witnesses said.

Anupam served showcase notice on the lawyer and directed him to appear before the court in five minutes, but Farooq defied the order. The court immediately charged him of contempt of court, they added.

Students block

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Adviser Prof Zahid Hassan Milky to press home their 11-point demand including freeing the campus from session backlog, improved medical facilities at the university.

RU teachers earlier went on an indefinite strike demanding cancellation of the controversial appointment of the staff.

JS body slams

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that prohibits foreign missions from interfering in the internal affairs of the country.

"Nobody should be allowed to violate the convention. We condemn it in the strongest possible terms," said Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan, chairman of the standing committee.

However, another BNP lawmaker on the committee took a strong exception to the view. "Why should we protect a corrupt minister who has a large number of graft allegations against him," meeting sources quoted ruling BNP lawmaker AKM Abu Taher as saying.

The parliamentary body nonetheless dismissed his remarks and resolved that the statement of the Danish embassy is unwanted, unfortunate, undiplomatic, out of state protocol and violation of the Vienna Convention.

The committee also asked the Danish embassy to refrain from making further such comments.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan also criticised the Danish embassy for putting out a press release, saying the matter should rather have been addressed through the proper channel. "We have already protested the embassy's statement," he said.

Held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the parliamentary committee meeting also discussed activities of Bangladeshi missions in different countries.

Govt plans

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Name of more than one non-governmental organisation has also been included in the intelligence reports.

"We have specific information about direct involvement of many people and NGOs, who conspired with the Awami League to unseat the government. We have got enough documents on hand and are considering to take legal action against them," said a frontline BNP leader, asking not to be named.

Political analysts are cautiously watching their efforts to bring about changes in politics.

The analysts however noted there is a need for a change in the prevailing political culture as the parliamentary government's functioning is being greatly impeded due to persisting absence of the opposition from parliament.

In recent months, former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain, former Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal president ASM Rob and former director general of Bangladesh Rifles ALM Fazlur Rahman floated different political platforms.

Pilots refuse

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operating the hazardous flights to Nepal.

However, Captain Kamal Mahmood, director of Biman's flight operations, said the F28s are airworthy. "We have got clearance from engineers that the planes are safe, but pilots are still refusing to fly. Currently, there is a shortage of captains for the F28s, but we have eight cadet pilots now undergoing training."

Sources said the pilots' boycott is a protest against Biman's move to procure two obsolete F28s from Indonesia, adding such a move shows poor business strategy on the part of Biman given that other airlines are phasing out the outdated planes.

"No one said the BJP will get 120 of the 200 seats in the recent assembly polls in Rajasthan but many were surprised when the results came out," he said.

better than it did in the 1999 elections, appeared in a fighting mood and launched a blistering attack on Vajpeey's BJP.

"The BJP and its allies made tall promises of bringing economic reform, eradicating poverty and corruption ... but these all turned out to be hollow promises because none of them has been fulfilled," said Gandhi in the Congress bastion of Dausa.

But Vajpeey, seeking to hold the premiership for a fourth term since 1996, scoffed at the polls, saying that the BJP's ouster of Congress in December's provincial balloting in Rajasthan had proven previous polls wrong.

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JCD men

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The OC however denied the allegation. The association leaders came to file a GD and wanted an amicable solution to the matter, he said.

Full use of WTO

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OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries would sharply expand, to 30 to 40 percent, creating a huge shortfall of labour.

Again, up to 2050, the European Union (EU) countries would need an additional 46 million migrant labour to keep their workforce strength constant. And up to 2025, the Central and Eastern Europe would require a net inflow of eight million people to stabilise their working age population.

Other developed countries will also face the same crisis, the paper added. "In the long term (up to 2050), without mass immigration, nearly all European countries will experience a decline of between 10 and 50 percent in their active population aged 15 to 65. This will almost inevitably lead to the systematic recruitment of both skilled, semi skilled and unskilled foreign labour on a scale that is much larger than what is the case at present."

In this context, to take the fullest advantage offered by the TMNP, the paper prepared by CPD Research

Fellow Ananya Raihan and Research Associate Mabroor Mahmood, advised the government to request the potential countries to open their markets under the GATS negotiation.

The paper also underscores linking skill development plan with identification of markets and negotiations for market access. As, "Otherwise the opportunities will remain unrealised."

Through the TMNP, if Bangladesh increase the number of professionals going abroad by 200,000 a year, it would gain an additional yearly income of \$11.57 billion.

An export of additional 200,000 unskilled workers would fetch \$3.5 billion and the same number of skilled workers \$381 million extra, the study projected.

CPD Executive Director Debapriya Bhattacharya presented the paper. CPD Research Director Mustafizur Rahman was also present.

Govt clinically dead

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adjoining areas. Uniformed and plainclothes police also closed the entrances of nearby markets and offices.

Police baton-charged and chased away about 250 AL workers as they chanted slogans near the lane leading to the AL office.

When the rally ended at 6:00pm, some AL leaders and workers tried to take out a procession but failed as police neither removed the barricade nor allowed any vehicles to get near the office.

AL leaders were forced to leave the office on foot and later regrouped at a distance to form a 500-strong procession led by AL leader Tofail Ahmed that marched to the Zero Point chanting slogans in favour of the two-day hartals beginning today.

But police again baton-charged the procession from behind and picked up an unspecified number of AL activists. At this point, senior AL leaders got into a heated argument with police before leaving the scene.

About 30 minutes later, police chased away about 250 AL workers as they chanted slogans near the lane leading to the AL office.

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2 labs set up in Faridpur to find cause of Nipah outbreak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP), Atlanta, US has set up two laboratories in Faridpur to assess initial cause of Nipah virus outbreak there.

The CDCP team is currently working in Faridpur to confirm the cause of the viral infection, believed to be responsible for claiming 18 lives in the district between February and March this year.

"A human lab and animal lab have already been set up at Faridpur Medical College Hospital," Prof Abdul Kalam Azad, director of Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research, International Centre for Health and Population Research (ICDDR,B), Bangladesh, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Both laboratories are engaged in sample collection to identify the cause and transmission of the virus," he added.

Meanwhile, two expert teams to control and identify the cause of virus outbreak are arriving in the capital within next week, health directorate officials said.

Heinrich Ulrich, Allen Ronald Grolla and Markus Rudolf, three experts on infection control, are expected to arrive by the end of this week with a machine to readily identify the virus known as polymerase chain reaction or PCR.

Another World Health Organisation team led by Dr CT Tan from Malaysia is also due next week.

However, experts are yet unsure if the virus transmit from human to human.