



Indigenous students of class-I attending a lecture on Mro, their mother tongue, at Dewai Headman Para Govt Primary School in Bandarban on Tuesday. Schoolteachers volunteer to teach as Mro is not included in their syllabus. Locals say many primary students drop off as they find studying in Bangla a daunting task.

PHOTO: SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

Man held over UK imam murder

MAIL ONLINE

A 31-year-old man was arrested yesterday over the murder of an imam in a children's playground in Rochdale, Manchester.

Jalal Uddin, 56, was found covered in blood with serious head injuries in the play area near South Street.

Police were called to the scene around 9:00pm (local time) and he was taken to hospital, where he died a short time later.

Locals said he had been to evening prayers at a mosque before visiting a friend.

It is believed the former Jalalia Jaame Mosque imam was taking a shortcut through the playground on his way home after eating dinner at the friend's house.

Forensic officers were examining the scene and the area was cordoned off yesterday.

Officials confirmed that a 31-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of murder.

Detective Superintendent Jon Chadwick of GMP's Serious Crime Division said: "Our investigation is at an early stage but we are keen to hear from anyone who may have been in the area near to where he was found in Wardleworth last night, as we work to establish how this man came to suffer his head injury."

Superintendent Rick Jackson said: "There has been a lot of speculation but the man died as a result of an assault."

"Just before 9:00pm the police were called to the Wardleworth play zone at the end South Street, Wardleworth, Rochdale. The assault occurred between 8:40pm and 8:55pm."

"We believe the deceased was walking home from a friend's house after attending a mosque earlier that evening."

2-year-old rescued

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was breaking stones at his workplace, saying she would take him home at the slum in Aliganj. But she allegedly abducted the child and took him to her village at Muradnagar in Comilla.

When the parents returned home from their workplace that night, they found Soma and her husband had disappeared with Leon.

The next day Soma's husband Maznu

allegedly claimed Tk 10,000 from Dilu over phone, Inspector Razzak said.

The police traced the couple using mobile technology and arrested them in Comilla at 1:30am on Thursday. During primary interrogation, they admitted that they had sold Leon to Anwar and Zaman for Tk 6,000.

During a raid in Durgapur area, the police arrested Anwar and Zaman and rescued the child, Razzak added.

Malaysia halts recruitment from abroad

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The new announcement, however, is a bolt from the blue for the irregular workers who had been hoping for better jobs and better pays, when regularised.

"The suspension will be in force until the government is satisfied with the manpower needs of the industries," Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said at a meeting with soldiers at the Muara Tuang Camp, Sarawak, according to Malaysia's state news agency, Bernama.

Hamidi, who is also home minister and head of the committee on recruiting foreign workers, said Malaysia would focus on the "foreign worker rehiring programme and step up enforcement to ensure that no more foreigners entered the country as workers."

"Foreign workers without valid documents or [who] have overstayed in the country will be arrested and sent

back to their country of origin," he said.

He hoped Malaysians, especially the youths, would respond to the government call for local people to take up the jobs now held by foreigners to become the nation's workforce to drive the national economy.

Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies President Mohammed Abul Basher termed Malaysia's decision as "death of a child before birth".

Its reasons must be internal and political and that Baira does not have any comment on that, he said.

But he hoped that once the legalisation process was complete, Malaysia would start recruiting workers from Bangladesh.

WHY THE SUSPENSION?

The Malaysian deputy prime minister's announcement in June last year that the country would recruit 1.5 million

Bangladeshi workers drew numerous controversies.

Malaysian trade unions and rights groups decried the announcement, arguing that the country was hosting over 2 million irregular migrants who needed to be regularised before making any fresh recruitment amid downturn of Malaysian economy.

The criticism became sharp when Malaysian media revealed some Malaysian private companies like Bestinet, Real Time Networking and Synerflux had been lobbying Bangladesh and Malaysian governments to win contracts. These companies -- directly or indirectly -- were owned by relatives of ruling party ministers.

Lately, Baira and Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur also warned that Malaysia's appointing a company -- Synerflux -- to regulate the labour recruitment would establish a

monopoly.

Baira in a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 16 said a syndicate led by Synerflux was behind the labour deal, and its main objective was to make profits out of the recruitment.

Citing 2014 statistics, the Malay Economic Action Council CEO Nizam Mahshar on Wednesday told media in Kuala Lumpur that there were 3.1 million foreign workers in Malaysia against its need for 1.72 million, mainly in low-skilled category jobs.

The surplus of foreign workers has led to a growing competition with local workers, affecting the wages of lower-income group, he said.

Liew Chin Tong, an MP of Malaysia's largest opposition Democratic Action Party, opposed recruiting new foreign workers, saying it would not help Malaysia's automation, mechanisation, innovation and technological upgrades.

Explaining the internal dynamics of Malaysia's decision, Mohammad Harun Al Rashid, coordinator of a regional NGO, Caram Asia, said the opposition, trade unions and rights groups were angered by Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's dealing with the foreign workers.

"If there was a real need of workers, there should be an assessment and consultation with the businesses. That was not done," he told The Daily Star from Kuala Lumpur by phone yesterday.

Because of such an attitude of the government, common Malaysians also opposed the government move, and often there has been xenophobic treatment against the Bangladeshi migrants there.

Only on Thursday, a Bangladeshi was beaten by a mob for alleged rape of a Malaysian girl, he said, adding that taking law into one's own hand was nothing but xenophobic under the

current context.

HANGING IN THE BALANCE

The fate of the undocumented Bangladeshis, meanwhile, is uncertain.

On the announcement of their arrest and deportation, Harun said the development was conflicting as Malaysia was in the process of legalising irregular migrants.

Agile Fernandez, director of migrant rights body Tenaganita based in Kuala Lumpur, said a large number of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia were undocumented because they were cheated by the agents and employers.

"If they are arrested and deported, it will be a total injustice to them," she told The Daily Star over the phone.

Fernandez suggested that the irregular workers be legalised and recruited first. Then, the Malaysian authorities should assess the need and recruit new workers, if needed.

Rise in child killings

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beaten to death by a group of men in Sylhet for allegedly trying to steal a rickshaw van. The incident was filmed and video footage was posted on social media.

On August 13, Rakib, 13, was tortured to death by his former employer in Khulna just because the boy had quit the job and started working elsewhere for better pay.

The gruesome murders of Rajon and Rakib, which shocked the entire nation, triggered a public outcry, resulting in a quick disposal of the cases over the murders. Six men were sentenced to death for killing the two boys.

Talking to this correspondent, Md Ziaur Rahman, chairman of criminology department at Dhaka University, said the incidents of child repression have been taking place for a long time. The major reasons behind this are "the culture of impunity" and "twisted mentality of a section of people".

He said law enforcers should equip themselves with new technology and create a special cell to deal with cases

involving children.

LALMONIRHAT INCIDENT

Eleven-year-old Kamrul Alam Kabya, a class-VI student of Lalmonirhat Government Boys' High School, was playing cricket with his friends in an open space at Purba Thanapara yesterday morning.

At one stage, the cricket ball flew into the compound of a nearby house. As Kabya went to the house to retrieve the ball, the house owner, Sohag Mia, got furious, said Mahfuzur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station.

Sohag grabbed the boy, tied his hands with a rope and beat him up, said the police officer.

The boy was later admitted to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

Police arrested Sohag after Kabya's father Sajid Alam lodged a case yesterday afternoon.

Sohag, however, denied torturing the boy. He told police that he had only scolded Kabya and other children.

Azmal Haque, resident medical officer at the hospital, said the boy had wounds in his legs and hands.

MYMENSINGH INCIDENT

A leader of Mymensingh municipality AL unit and his men intercepted 12-year-old Saddam Hossain at Patgudam while the boy was returning home from his aunt's house in Netrakona around 2:00pm on Wednesday, said the boy's mother, Parvin Akhter.

They accused the boy of stealing the mobile phone of a woman at Krishtapur and beat him up with sticks, said Parvin who collects scraps in the area.

"I am not a snatcher. I repeatedly requested them not to beat me, but they did not listen to me," Saddam told reporters yesterday at his home.

There was public outrage after video footage of the incident was posted on social media.

Around 10:00pm on Thursday, Parvin filed a case with Mymensingh Kotwali Police Station against four to five unidentified persons.

No arrests were made till last night.

Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat and Mymensingh contributed to this report.



Abdul Quader Bhasani, 88, is an inspirational figure for all. He actively took part in the language movement in 1952, and was incarcerated and harassed by police then. A constant companion of Majlum Jananeta Moulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Abdul Quader became a central committee member of the National Awami Party (NAP-Bhashani) and was given the title 'Bhasani' by Moulana Bhasani himself in 1960. At his Lalmonirhat home, he works on his farmland every day, and is held in high esteem by the villagers. "I will never forget Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani's advice of loving this country ... I still continue to do that," he says.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Dozens killed as US hits IS in Libya

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In November, a US air strike in Libya killed an IS leader, Abu Nabil, an Iraqi also known as Wissam Najm Abd Zayd al-Zubaydi. It was the first US strike against an IS leader in the North African country, where a US official estimated this month the jihadist group has about 5,000 fighters.

US President Barack Obama vowed Tuesday not to let IS build a base in Libya.

"We are working with our other coalition partners to make sure that, as we see opportunities to prevent ISIS from digging in in Libya, we take them," Obama said.

"We will continue to take actions where we got a clear operation and a clear target in mind."

In December, the Pentagon acknowledged that a group of US special operations troops who had travelled to Libya to "foster relationships" was kicked out of the conflict-

torn country soon after they arrived.

IS has exploited the turmoil in Libya since the overthrow of dictator Muammar Gaddafi five years ago, raising fears it is establishing a new stronghold on Europe's doorstep.

Last June, IS fighters captured the city of Sirte, 280 miles east of Tripoli.

The recognised government has been based in the country's far east, having fled a militia alliance including Islamists that overran the capital in August 2014.

Meanwhile, a report said the number of children who have died fighting for so-called Islamic State (IS) in the last year is nearly twice the previous estimate.

Researchers at Georgia State University tracked IS propaganda and eulogies over 13 months and found that three times as many children were involved in operations than 2014.

The propaganda also claimed 89 boys aged eight to 18 had been killed

fighting in a number of different combat roles.

The data, published by the US military's Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, suggested that between January 2015 and January 2016, 39% of the boys were killed in suicide car bombings and 33% in battle.

"There are almost certainly many more who have died," Charlie Winter, one of the report's co-authors, told the Victoria Derbyshire programme. "This is just what IS has made public over the last year."

Although IS itself did not provide real names and biographical details for those killed, the researchers were able to estimate the ages and nationalities of those killed.

They believe 60% were aged between 12 and 16, while 6% aged between eight and 12.

The research also seems to suggest that IS uses children alongside adults, rather than for specialist operations.

One shot dead

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Khandakar Lutful Kabir, commanding officer of Rab-4, said the gang's plan was to enter the bank's vault, just below the flat, by cutting through the floor and make off with money and valuables.

On Friday night, they started boring a large hole on the floor with various cutting tools, knowing that the bank would remain closed until Sunday, he said.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team raided the flat around 3:50am and arrested the five from two rooms.

As the Rab members went to another room of the flat, Masuk started firing on them from the room's toilet, forcing the Rab men to retaliate with gunfire. The brief gunfight left him injured, according to a Rab press release.

Masuk was rushed to Dhamrai Health Complex where doctors pronounced him dead.

Rab claimed that they found a four square feet floor tile already removed.

One pistol with four bullets and tools used in cutting concrete were recovered from the flat, they said.

Three Ansar men -- Rafiqul Islam, Bidhan Bishwas and Shawkot Ali -- were on duty at the bank's branch Friday night.

Rafiqul told The Daily Star that they did not hear any sound of floor cutting.

Apart from the 1,600sqft flat, there are prayer room, a healthcare office, and a National Life Insurance Company office on the second floor of the five-storey building.

This correspondent saw marks of blood on the staircases of the first floor. However, police did not allow him to enter the flat or the bank.

Hearing the news of her husband's death, Masuk's wife Nasima Akter along with her son Arju Mia

went to Dhamrai Police Station yesterday.

Talking to reporters there, she claimed that Masuk went to Chittagong to buy motor parts on Tuesday and since then he did not answer her phone calls.

"Masuk is a victim of a well-planned conspiracy. He could never be a robber," she claimed.

Nasima said Masuk was not in good health. He had a motorcycle accident just two months ago. Moreover, the upper left side of his body was burnt by boiling water. He had been suffering from various diseases as well.

Masuk's body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy. Morgue sources said a bullet was found in Masuk's skull.

The arrestees were handed over to Dhamrai police last night.

Rizaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Dhamrai Police Station, said filing of a case was underway.