

## FLASH FLOODS IN 2 UPAZILAS 40 Sylhet schools suspend classes

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Gowainghat

Academic activities at 40 primary schools in Gowainghat and Jointapur upazilas of Sylhet have remained suspended for the last week as the institutions are still under floodwater.

Of them, 25 are in Gowainghat upazila.

Authorities suspended the first term examinations of 22 of the flooded schools, said Rafiqul Islam, education officer of the upazila.

Shah Mishbah-uz-Jaman, assistant education officer of Jointapur upazila, said 15 government primary schools have been affected by a flash flood triggered by heavy rain and the onrushing water from the hills.

Upazila education officers have been asked to submit reports on the affected schools as early as possible, said Md Nurul Islam, district education officer of Sylhet.

A flood control embankment collapsed yesterday morning, flooding 30 villages in the two upazilas, Water Development Board sources said, adding that over 50,000 people in the low-lying areas of the upazilas are marooned.

Boro rice and vegetables on over 3,000 hectares of land in the two upazilas have gone under water, said sources of the Department of Agricultural Extension in the district.

## Youth workforce

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between 15 and 64 years. This age-group would increase to 13 crore by 2030, according to the report.

Now, the number of people aged above 60 years is 11 million, which would be 22 million in 2030 and 44 million in 2050.

With the rise in the aging population, the country will have to focus more on pension scheme. Then a lesser share of working population would have to pay higher taxes, Tasneem Mirza said.

Until that happens, action-oriented policies for creating quality jobs were recommended in the report to take advantage of the present demographic scenario.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, only some 6 lakh jobs were created in the last two years, which should have actually been 26 lakh.

Nearly 74 percent jobless people are youths.

According to the UNDP report, Bangladesh needs to create 25 million jobs between 2016 and 2030, which means 16 lakh new jobs should be available every year.

To stimulate the job market, the government needs to improve the business environment to encourage new businesses as well as foreign investments, said Tasneem Mirza.

Presently, employment in Bangladesh is concentrated mostly in agriculture, readymade garments and informal sector.

In the informal sector, the payments employees get are not enough to maintain a good living, Tasneem said.

Apart from that, only 55 percent of the working age women here are in job market, which must increase, the UNDP said in the report.

The country has 19 percent of its population between 15 and 24 years, who hold immense potentials.

"Bangladesh needs to diversify its economy. There are huge potentials in IT, banking, telecom sectors," Tasneem said.

Like other Asian countries, Bangladesh has higher savings and low investments. There are scopes for more foreign investments but better infrastructure of transport and energy and political stability are necessary.

Youths have to be involved in policy making and given incentives for entrepreneurship, the author of the report said.

The authorities need to have policies promoting skill-based education as per the market demand, she said.



A clothing market on one side of Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bhulta of Rugganj. Though the market has been causing a severe traffic jam in the area for a long time, the authorities are yet to take any step to remove it. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 2 hacked to death in flat

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stab wounds above his left eye and in the left arm.

The attack came only hours after Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said the security situation in Bangladesh was better than in many other countries.

It also comes just two days after the murder of Rajshahi University teacher Rezaul Karim Siddiquee in the northern city. According to US-based SITE Intelligence Group, international militant outfit Islamic State claimed responsibility for the murder.

The government insists there is no IS presence in the country. 'ALLAHU AKBAR'

Yesterday's killing mission lasted about five minutes, and the assailants chanted "Allahu Akbar" while hacking the two and also while leaving the scene, said neighbours.

One of the attackers changed his blood-stained blue shirt and then wore a white one.

"We suspect militants are involved in the killings," Mohammed Iqbal,

officer-in-charge of Kalabagan Police Station, told The Daily Star.

A five-member police team caught one suspect from a nearby road, but he fled after stabbing one officer. Police fired two shots while chasing the suspects who fired back and ran away, he added.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia said they were probing the incident and they would be able to say if it was a militant attack after the probe ended.

But he said it was a targeted and preplanned killing.

Police have found a bag, a mobile phone and several other things left behind by the assailants, he added.

The US State Department, the US embassy in Dhaka and the Amnesty International condemned the attack.

Xulhaz was a cousin of former foreign minister and Awami League leader Dipu Moni. She visited the home after the incident.

The bodies were taken to Dhaka Medical College for autopsies. 'THREATS FROM ISLAMISTS'

Xulhaz was behind an annual Rainbow Rally, which is being held on April 14, the Bangla New Year, since 2014.

But police this year banned the rally as part of security measures.

Ahead of the banned rally earlier this month, Xulhaz told AFP that they had received threats from Islamists, who posted messages online.

"They have even set up an online group to threaten us," he told the news agency.

Parvez, the injured security guard, told reporters at the DMCH that three young men dressed identically approached the gate of the seven-storey building and identifying themselves as employees of a courier service, they said they wanted to deliver two packages to Xulhaz.

Asking them to wait, Parvez went upstairs to ask Xulhaz if he was expecting any deliveries.

Just as Xulhaz was telling Parvez that he was not expecting any parcel, the three forcibly entered the apartment.

They attacked Parvez when he tried

to stop them from entering.

An injured Parvez then ran downstairs to call for help. Neighbours rushed to the flat and found the two lying in a pool of blood. By that time the attackers went out of the building.

Alamgir Hossain, a neighbour, said, "An elderly woman was crying in a feeble voice: please take my son to a hospital."

A woman in the neighbourhood told The Daily Star that she saw five to six youths, holding sharp weapons and firearms, leave the area shouting "Allahu Akbar".

Some of them were wearing navy blue shirts and others T-shirts and black plants.

According to her, the youths were aged between 22 and 28 and they carried backpacks.

They fired three shots while fleeing, she said, adding that many people were around but no one tried to intercept them.

Contacted, the home minister last night said they were hoping to find some evidence and arrest the culprits.

## Family decries bid to portray him as atheist

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Imtiaz joined the three-hour meeting at Shahidullah Arts Building.

Unidentified criminals brutally murdered Prof Rezaul in Shalbagan area of Rajshahi city on Saturday.

"My husband was an intellectual. The intellectuals have always been the targets of attacks, but they are too weak to stand up against evil forces," said Husna Ara.

She requested the teachers and students to remain vigilant so that no quarter can divert focus from the murder case.

"We've reached a stage where getting justice for any crime is very difficult. I am afraid I would not get justice.... What was the crime of my husband? Who will ensure justice for his murder at a time when many other important murder cases like that of Sagor-Runi's remain unresolved?" she questioned.

Prof Rezaul loved God and His creations. He had great love for the nature. He set up a music school and bought it a harmonium. He also bought the village youths cricket gears, added Husna Ara.

Her daughter Rizwana Hasin said if setting up of a music school is a crime to some people, what they would say about Prof Rezaul's contributions to a mosque and a madrasa at his village home.

She broke into tears by recalling the memory of her father. "Perhaps not only I, but the entire department lost a father."

Prof Rezaul's son Riasat Imtiaz urged all to look into his father's contributions to the mosque and madrasa, sports, culture and local poor people.

RU Vice Chancellor Prof Mizan Uddin said perusing knowledge was Rezaul's main objective. He was capable of taking up important administrative roles, but he was dedicated to the academic activities at the department.

Pro-VC Prof Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan and some English department teachers and students also spoke.

Meanwhile, Rajshahi University Teachers Association (RUTA) yesterday postponed their work abstention for seven days.

Shah Azam Shantunu, general secretary of RUTA, said the teachers

would go for a tougher movement if the police fails to make any significant progress in probing the murder case within this period.

Hundreds of teachers and students staged demonstrations on the campus for the third consecutive day yesterday, demanding immediate arrest of the killers. No classes and examinations were held.

Wearing black badges, they brought out a silent procession on the campus at 10:00am. Later, they held a rally in front of the Senate Building and formed a human chain on Paris Road.

Expressing their solidarity with the protest programmes, leaders and activists of Kendrio Sangskritik Jote, a platform of 10 cultural organisations of RU, joined the demonstrations.

Bagmara Upazila Education Development Association also formed a human chain in front of the Central Library of RU at 12:30pm, protesting the killing.

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Sazzad Bokul said the killing of Rezaul sparked panic among the progressive

teachers. "Our family members are asking us to stay indoors at night and not to study on the campus at night."

Senior teacher Abdur Rahman Siddiquee said slain Prof Rezaul was his student.

"The state must take the Rezaul murder case seriously because if it can't ensure security of its citizens like Prof Rezaul, its very existence would be jeopardised," he added.

PROTEST AT DU Teachers of Dhaka University yesterday stressed the need for holding the trial of Rezaul murder case in a speedy trial tribunal.

Protesting the killing, over 100 teachers under the banner of Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) formed a human chain in front of the historic Bottola on the campus, reports our DU correspondent.

"It doesn't matter whether Rezaul was an atheist or not. The killers must be tried by a speedy trial tribunal," said Farid Uddin Ahmed, president of DUTA.

Condemning the killing, he said it is

## Draft law

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of the judge concerned, the recommendation would be placed before the JS for discussion. And if adopted by two-thirds of the lawmakers, it would then be sent to the president for approval.

The cabinet secretary said if anyone brings false and baseless allegations of misconduct against any SC judge, the person would face two years of imprisonment or a fine of maximum Tk five lakh.

Such law is in practice in many countries, including the US, the UK, India and Australia, he said.

A similar law was there in the original constitution of 1972. But it was changed after 1975, and a provision was included in the charter for constituting Supreme Judicial Council. Such a council doesn't exist in any country except for Pakistan, he said.

The proposed law has a provision for "honourable exit" of an SC judge found guilty of misconduct, said Alam.

The cabinet would give its final decision on the draft law following discussions among all stakeholders on the matter, said the cabinet secretary.

Replying to a query, he said the proposed law doesn't contain anything which would curb the independence of the judiciary.

Law Minister Anisul Huq told BBC Bangla that this initiative [for enacting the law] would strengthen democracy as well as ensure accountability and transparency.

"Our aim is to ensure that no one can dishonour any judge," he said.

Barrister M Amir-ul Islam, a member of the drafting committee of Bangladesh Constitution, 1972, said the government should have made a law first for appointing judges as per the constitutional provision of 95(2) [C]. The appointment of judges, not their removal, should be the first priority.

Judges should be appointed on the basis of qualification and track record so that there would be very little scope for their impeachment, he said.

"This should be our first priority. No government or parliament has ever addressed this. Now we are debating on the question of the removal of judges.

"In our experience, impeachment by parliament that we see sometimes becomes very politically motivated as happened in Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka."

The eminent jurist said no one would dispute that parliament is the decision-making body regarding the impeachment of judges.

He, however, said Malaysia and Sri Lanka saw political complications in impeaching judges. "So we should take their experience into consideration."

Yesterday, the cabinet also approved the draft of the National Housing Policy 2016, and a proposal for establishing the Container Company of Bangladesh Ltd for running the railway's container transport services by an independent committee.

Besides, the cabinet adopted a resolution congratulating Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for being selected as a member of the High-Level UN Panel on Water.

## Jail guard killed

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wound. Blood was also gushing out of his head.

Rustam was not in uniform.

Police reached the spot about an hour later, said some locals. They sent the body to Shaheed Taj Uddin Ahmed Medical College morgue in Gazipur for an autopsy.

Abdus Salam, residential medical officer of the hospital, said Rustam was shot in the left of his chest and left cheek. Two bullets were inside the body.

Rustam served as the chief prison guard at Jail-1 before he went on leave preparatory to retirement (LPR) a few months ago, said Inspector General of Prisons (IGP) Brig Gen Syed Iftekhar Uddin.

The body was handed over to the prison authority in the afternoon after the autopsy. The prison authority suspected that there might be a militant link in the killing.

Delwar Hossain, superintendent of police in Gazipur, said they would look into any possible militant links.

He said police picked up at least seven people, including Rustam's wife Nasrin Akter, Sohel Rana, husband of



Rustam's adopted daughter Nahida, and owner of the pharmacy Saiful Islam, who was at the shop, for questioning.

The SP said they would investigate whether any family dispute was behind the murder.

The police official said Rustam had bought land and built a house in the area a couple of years ago.

He, however, was living with his wife at the staff quarters inside the jail compound, said jail authorities.

Briefing media near the spot in the afternoon, IGP Iftekhar said preliminary probe suggests the killing "seems to be planned".

He later said it seemed the killers were professionals. The crime scene was beyond the jurisdiction of the jail authority and that it was not possible for the jail staff to react immediately.

He said Rustam had served as prison guard at some of the jails where militants had been kept. Rustam was the chief prison guard of Jail-1 where most of the convicted militants are kept.

The IGP said in their attempts to control the convicts, prison officials at times had disputes with them.

"Whether he developed any enmity with the militants kept inside the jail or any of their groups outside

need to be investigated," said the IGP.

Rustam was promoted to sergeant instructor two weeks before he went on LPR. He was transferred to the female jail in Kashimpur in November last year, the IGP added.

According to him, a murder so close to the prison was "of great concern to the prison authority and the public". The jail authorities all over the country have been instructed to beef up security.

The jail authority said Rustam was born in 1956 in Pirojpur and raised in Comilla. He joined work in 1974. He had not fathered any children.

Before joining Kashimpur jail, he served at Barisal jail.

Locals said the place where he was killed is the busiest place in the area and Rustam did his daily shopping from there.

Shop-owner Mominul Haque who knew Rustam in person said as far as he was concerned, Rustam had no

enmity with anyone.

The prison authority formed a three-member committee, led by Deputy Inspector General (prisons) Golam Haider of Dhaka, to probe the incident and asked the committee to submit a report in seven working days, said Iftekhar.

Alongside local police, members of Rapid Action Battalion and Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) collected evidence from the spot.

Joydevpur police said no case was filed in connection with the killing as of 11:00pm last night.

In February, 2014, an armed gang ambushed a prison van carrying militants from Kashimpur jail to Mymensingh and took three convicted members of banned militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh in Trishal of Mymensingh.

Two of them were on death row.

## New Libyan govt takes over foreign ministry

AFP, Tripoli

Libya's new unity government yesterday took control of the foreign affairs ministry headquarters in Tripoli as it seeks to assert its authority over the violence-plagued country.

Mohammad al-Amari, a minister of state in the Government of National Accord, signed the documents passing control of the complex in the north of the capital to the new government, an AFP journalist said.

Since last Monday, the unity government has also taken control of the transport, social affairs, environment, and youth and sports ministries.

The international community sees the GNA as the best hope for oil-rich Libya, which has been roiled by turmoil since the 2011 ouster and killing of longtime ruler Moamer Gaddafi.