

UGC DIRECTIVE Form monitoring cells at all pvt universities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has directed the authorities of all private universities to form a monitoring cell for initiating awareness programmes against terrorism, extremism and militancy.

The universities were ordered to send a copy of office order on formation of the cell with names and designation of the cell members to the commission, said a UGC press release yesterday.

The commission also asked the universities to send reports on the cell's activities to it and the education ministry every month, the release said.

The UGC move came as part of the government's effort to fight militancy.

There are 94 private universities that have government permission. Eighty four are currently operating with some 4.63 lakh students studying.

The recent terror attacks on the Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan area and Sholakia Eidgah in Kishoreganj forced the government to take some measures at the universities as some of the attackers killed in Gulshan and Sholakia incidents, and some of those killed in Kalyanpur raid were former and present students of a few private universities.

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A flood-hit approach road to a pontoon of the Daulatdia ferry terminal. Roads near two of the four pontoons of the terminal have been badly affected by the flood, and work is underway to have them repaired, leading to frequent traffic snarl-up near the terminal, inset.



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Six teachers held with 'jihadi books'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Police arrested six teachers of a privately-run primary school, including its headmaster, along with "jihadi books" and "sharp weapons" in the district's Kaharol upazila yesterday.

The arrestees are Zakirul Islam, headmaster of Victoria Residential School, and its five teachers Shamim Reza, Abul Kalam Azad, Rafiqul Islam, Alam Mia and Badrul Islam.

Police said five of the arrestees are activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, pro-Jamaat-e-Islami student body, while Badrul is a former member of the organisation.

Monsur Ali, officer-in-charge of Kaharol Police Station, said on information, police raided the school in Beldanga village around 11:00am and caught the six teachers with sharp weapons and jihadi books.

He said they had information that the teachers were planning to carry out subversive activities in the district.

The school had no approval, the police official added.

A Dinaipur court sent the arrestees to jail when they were produced before it.

A case was filed against the arrestees under the arms act.

1,500 migrant workers

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"Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani workers at the company faced difficulties in getting food for two days in last week as the caterer stopped supplying food," Sarwar said.

There is no problem now with food supplies as the caterer has resumed services under the direct supervision of the Saudi labour ministry, he mentioned, adding that they already discussed the matter with the Saudi labour minister.

"We are now preparing a database of Bangladeshi workers at the factory and collecting details about their problems after visiting labour camps. We are thinking of multiple ways to overcome the problems."

There is a strong possibility that the Saudi company would be closed, said the embassy official.

Sarwar added that the Bangladesh embassy recommended the Saudi labour ministry for immediate payment of all arrears wages of workers, renewal of workers' iqama or work permits to enable them to switch jobs and granting permission to those who want to return home.

The news of workers' suffering came to light last week when some Indian media outlets reported that around 10,000 Indian employees at the construction firm were facing food shortages.

Indian Foreign Minister Sushma

Swaraj intervened in the humanitarian crisis last week after a distressed man at a camp in Jeddah sent a direct appeal for help, reported Times of India.

An Indian worker told the IANS that the Saudi construction sector was going through a slowdown due to the fall in global crude oil prices. "It has hit not only Saudi Arabia, but also the other Gulf countries," he added.

Meanwhile, Saudi King Salman yesterday directed Labour and Social Development Minister Mufrej Al-Haqbani to take necessary measures to solve the problems faced by 2,500 Indian workers, reported Arab News.

"What happened was an individual act by one company which did a mistake," the minister told the media following a meeting with visiting Indian State Minister of External Affairs VK Singh.

Al-Haqbani said his country does not tolerate any violation to the rights of workers of any nationality.

Saudi Arabia, like other oil-rich Gulf countries, depends heavily on Asian migrant workers, mainly from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Rights groups like Amnesty International over the years have reported that migrant workers in Gulf countries often suffer difficulties including nonpayment of wages, dangerous working conditions and poor accommodation.

KNIFE ATTACK US woman killed in London

REUTERS, London

A US woman was killed and five other people injured by a man with suspected mental health issues who went on a rampage with a knife in central London, but police said there was no evidence that the attack was terrorism related.

Armed police were called at 10:33pm (2133 GMT) after a Norwegian man of Somali origin with a knife started to attack people in London's Russell Square, an elegant park near the site of a 2005 suicide bombing.

The victim, a US citizen in her 60s, was treated at the scene but pronounced dead a short time later.

Another woman and four men were treated in hospital, though three of them were later discharged. Nationals from Australia, Britain, Israel and the United States were among those hurt.

"All of the work we have done so far increasingly points to this tragic incident as having been triggered by mental health issues," said London Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley.

"We believe this was a spontaneous attack and that the victims were selected at random," said Rowley, who is Britain's most senior anti-terrorism officer.

"So far we have found no evidence of radicalisation that would suggest that the man in our custody is in any way motivated by terrorism," said

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'He took part in RU teacher murder'

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the confessional statement of Maskawat Hasan Sakib alias Abdullah, a member of banned outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), of Shibganj in Bogra.

Sakib, who himself had a role in the killing, made the confession in a Rajshahi court a day after he was arrested on May 15. He gave a detailed account of how the murder had been carried out and who were involved.

The Daily Star has a copy of his statement.

Of the eight JMB men involved, four took part in the killing on April 23.

Of them, Shariful Islam, of Sripur village of Bagmara in Rajshahi, was codenamed Khalid. He was a 3rd year student of the English department of RU.

Nazrul Islam alias Baik Hasan was killed in what police say is a gunfight at Ashrafer Mor in Rajshahi city on July 2.

Osman of Joypurhat, who was known to the police as Tareque, was killed in another "gunfight" on June 7.

Sakib identified another JMB activist having links to the murder as Mamun, of Mohimaganj of Gaibandha district. He achieved a diploma from Rangpur Polytechnic Institute and joined the militant outfit in 2013. To spread militancy, Sakib travelled extensively across the northern districts of Natore, Rajshahi, Bogra

and Gaibandha.

Sakib used to communicate with the other militants through Threema app and his ID was "Badman". He had completed tasks in line with the instructions given through the Android phone app.

The killers of Rezaul used to meet at Govindaganj of Gaibandha.

Sakib went to Govindaganj on April 16 after Osman texted him to go there. There Mamun gave Osman a black coloured Discovery 135mm motorcycle and three machetes.

Sakib and Osman then went to Rajshahi by the motorcycle and met Shariful, Bike Hasan, and Payel at a petrol pump beside Rajshahi bypass road.

Shariful, Hasan and Payel took the motorcycle and machetes and asked Sakib to stay at the house of Abdus Sattar and his son Ripon.

The police later arrested Sattar and Ripon who also made confessional statements.

The decision of killing Prof Rezaul the next morning was postponed around 8:00pm of April 16. Sakib went back home.

Shariful asked Sakib to go to Rajshahi again on April 22 through an SMS.

Sakib went to Bhadra intersection of Rajshahi city on the motorcycle around 6:30am the next day and gave the vehicle to Hasan.

Hasan took along Shariful and Payel on the motorcycle and told Sakib to go to Shalbagan by an autorickshaw.

At Shalbagan, Sakib saw Hasan standing by the motorcycle while Shariful and Payel was waiting on the road that goes to the house of Prof Rezaul.

Soon Rezaul appeared. He was walking slowly towards his killers with a bag hanging from his shoulder to catch a university bus.

Payel and Shariful, a student of Prof Rezaul, walked towards their target and went past him.

Payel then pulled out a machete from inside his clothe and stabbed the professor. The next blow came from his department student Shariful.

Hasan at the time rebuked Sakib for standing idle and doing nothing.

Sakib took a machete from Hasan and hacked the professor to confirm his death, according to his confession.

Hasan collected the machetes and sped away on the motorbike along with Shariful and Payel.

Apart from Sakib, Sattar, Ripon and another RU student Rahmatullah gave confessional statements in the case. They all are now in jail.

Payel was among the five militants killed during "Operation Thunderbolt" carried out to end the 11-hour siege at the Gushan cafe. Shariful is on the run.

Commuters

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Like her, hundreds of other commuters are suffering every day for lack of transport as bus operation at almost all the places in Gulshan and Banani areas of the capital have remained suspended for over a month now.

The authorities concerned suspended the bus services for security reasons

following the terror attack at Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan, said officials from the traffic division of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

On July 1, gunmen stormed the upscale eatery and killed 20 hostages, mostly foreign nationals. Two police officials were also killed during the 12-hour hostage standoff.

Buses were seen operating only on the Mohakhali-Gulshan-1-Link Road route.

However, talking to The Daily Star, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Annisul Huq said as an "alternative measure", 30 air-conditioned (AC) buses and 500 rickshaws would hit the streets in the areas by August 9.

Meanwhile, the suspension of the bus operation without arranging any "alternative way" has irked many commuters.

"People having cars might not face any trouble but it is making us suffer a lot," said Kalimullah, who works at a stationery shop in Gulshan-2 area.

People's transport cost has also increased.

Earlier, Sabir Hossain, an employee of an international development organisation, had to pay a bus fare of Tk 25 for travelling from his home at Mirpur-11 to his office at Gulshan-2.

But lately, he has to get down at the Kakoli intersection and reach his office by CNG-run auto-rickshaws, costing him an additional Tk 80 to Tk

100 every day.

Even though, auto-rickshaws and taxis are allowed to operate in the areas, their number is not sufficient.

The Daily Star correspondents visited the Kakoli, Gulshan-1 and Gulshan-2 intersections yesterday and saw people rushing to hire auto-rickshaws.

Taking the advantage of the transport crisis, the CNG drivers and rickshaw-pullers were charging extra.

With an aim to lessen public sufferings, 30 AC buses would be introduced by August 9 and these vehicles would be operated within Gulshan, Banani and Niketon areas, said DNCC Mayor Annisul Huq.

Although private operators will run the service, the DNCC would coordinate the overall activity with the help of DMP and other stakeholders, he said.

"We will set the passengers' fare as per the government rate," he told this paper on Monday.

As per rules, any commercial vehicle must take route permit for its operation. In case of vehicles under the Dhaka metropolitan area, the Regional Transport Committee headed by the DMP commissioner issues the route permit.

The process of taking the route permit is underway, said the mayor.

Of the 30 buses, some will carry passengers from Natunbazar to Kakoli while others between Police Plaza near Hatirjheel and Gulshan, he added.

Apart from the buses, 500 rickshaws will also hit the streets in the areas.

The rickshaw-pullers and bus drivers will be provided with ID cards, said Rafiqul Islam, assistant commissioner of police (Gulshan zone).

The number of buses and rickshaws would be increased, if needed, said police.

Rejoinder

FROM PAGE 1

Cooler is a DIY (do it yourself) product and thus the real numbers of installation could not be confirmed."

OUR REPLY

The Daily Star report was based on phone interviews with several officials of Grey Bangladesh and Grameen Intel Social Business, interviews of Grey Bangladesh officials published in various international media, videos available on YouTube and the official website of the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.

A Grey Bangladesh senior official told France 24 Observers that to distribute the Eco-Coolers, they teamed up with Grameen Intel Social Business Ltd.

(<http://observers.france24.com/en/20160602-bangladesh-air-conditioner-plastic-bottles-technology>.)

Employees of Grameen Intel produced a video on the innovation which is available on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSbZWnk84F4>).

At the time of writing the report, an official of Grameen Intel, seeking anonymity, said some of their employees had volunteered in the project.

Asked about the number of households using the device, Grey Bangladesh officials immediately could not give the specific number, saying anybody could do as it was a DIY product.

When pressed saying that various media were mentioning the number to be more than 25,000 as of February, an official did not rule it out.

Still, we regret if there is any inaccuracy in the article.



Pilgrims pray before leaving Dhaka on the first hajj flight of Bangladesh Biman yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Maiden Hajj flight reaches Saudi Arabia

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Mosharrar Hossain said in a statement.

"Bangladesh Biman will carry a total 51,000 hajjis through their regular and hajj-flight operations. Biman has taken all preparations to operate the hajj flights smoothly," he said adding that Biman will also carry some hajj flights from Chittagong and Sylhet International Airports.

Civil Aviation Minister Rashed Khan Menon said his ministry has taken all-out preparations to ensure the Hajj flights are run on schedule.

"A monitoring team led by the secretaries of civil aviation and reli-

gious affairs has been formed so that there is no irregularity in the management of these flights," he said, assuring the pilgrims after inaugurating the maiden flight.

Biman Bangladesh will operate 144 flights while Saudia Airlines will operate 107 flights from Bangladesh, said a press release of the civil aviation ministry. Biman Bangladesh Airlines -- the national flag carrier of Bangladesh -- and Saudi Arabian Airlines have been selected by the government for carrying the Hajj pilgrims this year.

Both airlines will carry equal number of passengers and maximum luggage allowance for each passen-

ger will be 46 kilograms.

A total of 1,01,758 Bangladeshis are expected to perform Hajj this year. Only 10,000 of them would perform Hajj under government management and the remaining 91,758 under private managements.

The outgoing flights will continue till September 5 and the return flights will begin on September 17 and end on October 16. The holy Hajj is likely to be held on September 12, subject to sighting of the moon.

Earlier, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated Hajj 2016 activities on Wednesday through a programme in city's Askona Hajj Camp.