

'Stalker' assaults college girl in B'baria

A CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

An alleged stalker slapped a female student in the face in the common room of Akhaura Shahid Smriti Degree College yesterday as she refused to talk to him.

Locals said Priyotomo Ghosh Prakash alias Pritom Ghosh, 24, used to stalk the first year HSC student on her way to and from the college. The two live with their families in nearby houses in Radhanagar of Akhaura upazila.

Around noon yesterday, Pritom reached the college and looked for her. At one point, he entered the common room for female students and tried to talk to her.

Failing to get a response from her, Pritom slapped her in the face several times, said Principal Zainal Abedin of the college, quoting witnesses.

As some other students came to her rescue, the attacker fled.

The student's father lodged a case with Akhaura Police Station, accusing Pritom of assaulting his daughter, said Mosharrif Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Takjil Khalifa Kajol, mayor of Akhaura Municipality, said Pritom's family members locked up their home and left the area following the incident.

The victim's family members feared a fresh attack from Pritom as police were yet to arrest him.

Shahana

FROM PAGE 16

Like Abul Bajandar, they wish to help the 10-year-old girl, find a solution to the rarest skin disorder, in which warts triggered by a virus thicken and harden into horns before branching out from the skin.

"We received an email from an American lab in Los Angeles, which asked for Shahana's blood, tissue and saliva samples for the diagnosis," said Dr Sen, one of the six-member medical board.

Asked about Bajandar's lab report, he said the American lab was still testing his samples intensely to diagnose his illness. Hopefully, a complete report will come soon.

Headed by bum and plastic surgery unit chief Abul Kalam Azad, the medical board will treat Shahana completely free of cost, Dr Sen said, adding that he had recently heard about three to four more similar cases.

Daughter of a poor farmer in Netrokona, Shahana got prickly rashes on her face when she was only a year old. When she turned six, those began to grow and spread raising the alarm.

Two years later, rashes began to grow over her ears and right leg knee. Frantically, her father took her to a homeopathic doctor whose prescribed medicines she had for a month, but nothing changed.

Learning that, treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital would be free of cost, the poor father came to Dhaka along with the girl.

Earlier, Abul Bajandar, 26, was operated on at least 18 times at the same hospital to remove bark-like warts from his limbs. According to doctors, he may need four to five more surgeries.

Bajandar has been suffering from epidermodysplasia verruciformis, a rare skin disorder commonly known as tree-man illness that covers limbs with warts, making them look like tree branches.

250,000 homes without power as storm hits France

AFP, Paris

Gale-force winds battered France's southwestern Atlantic coast yesterday, leaving more than quarter of million homes without power, the national electricity grid Enedis said.

National weather agency Météo France said winds reaching speeds of up to 148 kilometres per hour (92 miles per hour) had battered the coast and warned that in some places they could even reach 160 kph.

Three western regions were put on red alert as the storm felled trees and brought down powerlines, cutting off roads although there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Enedis said that power had been cut to more than 250,000 homes in the departments of Gironde and Charentes with another 1,000 affected in the neighbouring region of Landes.

It said it had on Friday doubled its number of staff working in order to tackle the anticipated storm damage.

Overnight, firefighters were called out more than 140 times, mainly to clear trees and fallen power lines, local officials said.

Although the winds are expected to die down later in the day, another less powerful storm is expected to hit the western coastline on Sunday, forecasters said.

Kept in mortuary

FROM PAGE 1

The man, Khokon alias Khoka Chowdhury alias Raju Chowdhury, was the owner of Capital Super Market situated on over one and a half bighas near Farmgate in the capital.

Talking to The Daily Star recently, some of the shopkeepers at the three-storey market said apart from the dispute over the religion, his properties could also be a reason for the crisis surfaced after his death.

"It's simple because whoever wins the case would become the custodian of his properties," one of them said, adding that Khokon's brothers and other family members were taking the earnings from his businesses.

Aged 68, Khokon died on June 26, 2014, after being treated at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Birdem Hospital for 11 days. After his death, a woman, Mira Nandi, went to the hospital authorities and claimed the body for cremation, saying she was his wife. Khokon's brother Babul Nandi was also there.

However, the other woman, Habiba Akhter, a college teacher, appeared there and said the body should be buried as Khokon, according to her, had converted to Islam decades ago. She also wanted to take the body, saying Khokon married her back in the 1980s.

Mira, however, rejected the claim, saying Khokon and she were always together.

As the matter could not be settled

even three days after Khokon's death, Ramna police went to the hospital and tried to intervene, but could not come to a conclusion.

Over the same week, the women and the hospital authorities filed several general diaries (GD) with Ramna Police Station. Later, the matter ended up at a Dhaka court.

The case was transferred twice. Currently, a third court is hearing it, said Babul.

Meanwhile, the bills at the Birdem hospital was almost Tk 3 lakh, which has not yet been paid, said an employee there, adding that it would be paid by the one winning the case.

The body was later taken to the DMC morgue from the hospital.

"Khokon was Hindu by birth and Mira was his wife. But he converted to Islam in 1980. He married me four years later," Habiba told The Daily Star recently.

Khokon's younger brother Babul, however, rejected her claim. "He never converted to any other religion. He always used to live with his wife Mira and their children".

As the lawsuit drags on, the body remains as a burden on the morgue, said a DMC staff, adding that the mortuary freezer can store only 20 bodies at a time. Often, almost half of those remain out of order, he added.

Habiba said she visits Khokon's body at the morgue at least twice a month. It was decomposing and hardly recognisable, she added.

Protests go on

FROM PAGE 1

Police yesterday arrested six accused, including two brothers of the mayor, in connection with the killing.

Meanwhile, a half-day hartal enforced by local journalists and Chhatra League activists protesting the killing ended peacefully in the upazila yesterday.

Shimul, who suffered bullet wounds during the clash between two rival groups of local AL, died of his injuries on Friday while being taken to Dhaka from a Bogra hospital.

His 90-year-old grandmother, Rokeya Begum, could not bear the shock and suffered a heart attack. She too died on Friday.

A video filmed during the clash showed the mayor with a firearm. In the two-minute video, Miru, wearing a brown blazer and white pyjamas, was seen walking with the gun behind a group of people who were chasing their rivals with sharp weapons.

The video, captured by a local, also showed police trying to bring the situation under control. The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the video.

CASE FILED AGAINST MIRU, OTHERS

Shimul's wife Nurun Nahar Begum filed a case with Shahzadpur Police Station on Friday night against Miru, his two brothers, 15 named and 20 to 25 unnamed people.

The complainant in the case statement claimed that Shimul went to cover news in front of Mayor's Monirampur house Thursday afternoon when the AL activists staged a protest there.

"The bullet, which was shot from the mayor's house during the agitation, hit my husband, leaving him critically injured, and he died of his injuries Friday noon," reads the case statement.

"I want punishment of the real culprits no matter whatever position they hold," Nurun Nahar told this newspaper.

Contacted, Abul Hasnat, assistant superintendent of police in Sirajganj, said police in primary investigation found evidence that the bullet was shot from the mayor's house.

He said they seized the mayor's firearm and collected a bullet's shell from his house. After forensic tests, it could be ascertained whether the bullet was fired from the mayor's firearm, he added.

The ASP said they also seized 43 bullets from Miru's house.

Rezaul Haque, officer-in-charge of Shahzadpur Police Station, said six accused, including Miru's two brothers -- Habibul Haque Mintu and Hasibul Haque Pintu -- were arrested in connection with the killing.

"The mayor went into hiding after the incident, but we are trying to arrest him," he added.

KILLERS MUST BE PUNISHED: NASIM

Health and Family Welfare Minister

Mohammad Nasim yesterday at a programme in Pabna said the killers of Shimul must be punished, even if they are influential.

"The Awami League is a big political party. There may be some trivial problems, but those involved in crimes never get the support from the party."

"Several accused have already been held and the rest would be arrested soon..." the minister told reporters after inaugurating an Intensive Care Unit at Pabna Sadar Hospital.

ASK DEMANDS PUNISHMENT OF KILLERS

Rights organisation Ain o Salish Kendra yesterday in a press release expressed deep concern over the killing of Shimul. It also demanded that those involved in the killing be brought to justice soon.

CPJ DEMANDS VIGOROUS INVESTIGATION

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has said Bangladesh authorities should vigorously investigate and bring to justice those responsible for killing Abdul Hakim Shimul.

"This shooting took place before many witnesses, and police have reportedly seized the weapon and identified its owner," said Steven Butler, CPJ Asia programme coordinator.

"There can be no excuse for failing to swiftly bring the perpetrators to justice," Butler was quoted as saying in a message released from Washington.

BFUI, DUJ, PRESS COUNCIL CONDEMN KILLING

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists in a joint statement condemned the killing and demanded highest punishment of the killers, reports BSS.

Expressing shock at the killing of Shimul, Bangladesh Press Council yesterday in a press release demanded quick legal action against the killers.

HARTAL OBSERVED

Journalists across the country protested the killing and demanded immediate arrest of the perpetrators.

The local press club and the Chhatra League, pro-Awami League student body, yesterday enforced a half-day hartal in the upazila.

Shops and other institutions remained closed while journalists and locals brought out processions in the upazila town, demanding punishment of the killers.

SHIMUL, HIS GRANDMOTHER BURIED

The victims' relatives, local politicians and a large number of people attended a namaz-e-janaza of Shimul and his grandmother at Shahzadpur Pilot School ground around 10:30am yesterday.

They were laid to rest at the family graveyard in Madra.

Six killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Six people including a college student and a police constable were killed in separate road accidents in five districts over the last two days.

Enamul Haque, 37, a constable of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) was killed when a passenger bus hit a microbus at Chakoria upazila yesterday at around 7:30 am at Harbang Inani area of Chakoria upazila on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway.

Enamul died on the scene and six others were injured.

He was returning to work from his village home in Chakoria, said Abul Hashem, in-charge of Chakoria Chiringa highway police outpost.

Two local AL leaders of Singra upazila in Natore died when a truck rammmed their motorcycle on the Natore-Bogra Highway on Friday night.

Shakhawat Hossain Bakul, 38, president of Chamari Union unit AL and Mahbulul Alam Madhu, 36, president of ward-8 unit AL of Chamari Union Unit AL died on the spot, police said.

Nasir Uddin, officer-in-charge of Singra Police Station, said Shakhawat and Mahbulul were returning home from Singra upazila at around 9:00 pm when the truck overturned and hit them before falling into a roadside ditch.

The truck driver and his helper managed to flee the scene.

In Nakla upazila of Sherpur, Sohanur Hossain, 18, a college student, was killed and his mother, aunt, and cousin injured when a speeding bus rammmed the auto-rickshaw they were in.

The accident took place at around 8:00pm on Friday in Jalalpur area, said Golam Haider, officer-in-charge of Nakla Police Station.

He added that driver of the bus was arrested and sent to jail.

An elderly bike rider was crushed to death by a truck on the Malancha road under Kahaloo upazila in Bogra yesterday noon.

Mozaffar Hossain, 55, was a resident of Muradpur village under Shibgonj upazila of the district.

Agitated locals torched the truck after the accident and police arrested the driver, said Nur-e-Alam Siddiki, officer-in-charge of Kahaloo police station.

In yet another incident a security guard Moin Uddin, 55, was crushed under a covered van in Narayanganj when the van was reversing its way out of a factory in Fatulla.

Saudi diplomat

FROM PAGE 16

The 39-year-old was convicted of molesting her on two occasions, and during the second time, forcing her to touch him.

District Judge Lee Poh Choo reportedly found the victim, who denied her allegations were part of a false conspiracy to extort money, "unusually convincing".

He was also sentenced today to 26 months and one week in jail, but because he is appealing the conviction, has been released on a \$520,000 bail.

Corporal punishment is largely banned throughout Europe and in 31 US states.

Indonesia, one of several south-east Asia countries where caning is written into the national judicial system, caned a 20-year-old woman for standing too close to her boyfriend.

The Independent has contacted the Saudi embassy, in Singapore, for comment.

Sensible

FROM PAGE 16

According to the PM's deputy press secretary, the premier has already directed her personal staff to revise the schedules of her programmes that would be held on exam days.

The three-day E-9 Ministerial Meeting is set to kick off today with the theme "Education for the 21st century".

The E-9 countries are Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan.

Representatives of the countries will discuss their experiences in education, exchange best practices and monitor progress on achieving Education for All (EFA).

The meeting will focus on a specific theme for a two-year period to discuss measures to strengthen cooperation among the E-9 member countries.

Since its inception in 1993, the E-9 network has also become a powerful lobby for the EFA and South-South Cooperation.

Trump to speak to Poroshenko as Ukraine unrest surges

AFP, Avdiivka

US President Donald Trump was to hold his first talks with Ukraine's leader yesterday as a surge in fighting killed dozens refocusing world attention on the conflict in Europe's backyard.

The phone conversation comes as the death toll hit 35 following a week of clashes between Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed insurgents in a level of bloodshed unseen in the eastern war zone since 2015.

The violence erupted as Trump seeks to build a friendship with Russia's Vladimir Putin with some analysts linking the escalation to the potential thaw in ties.

The scheduled call -- which will take place in the evening -- will see Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko seeking to win assurances of Washington's continued diplomatic and non-lethal military support.

It comes a week after the new US leader spoke to Putin.

Russia and Ukraine along with the rebels on Wednesday signed up to calls for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the flashpoint town Avdiivka by Sunday.

But the demand for the shooting to stop has not halted the violence and so far there has been little sign of the big guns being pulled back around the Kiev-held industrial town of 25,000 at the centre of the fighting.

AFP correspondents on site said the night and morning passed relatively calmly compared to previous ones.

But the Ukrainian army said one of its soldiers had been killed in the area.

"Tonight, we saw shelling on the outskirts of Avdiivka but there were

no major attacks on the city itself," regional police spokeswoman Nataliya Shyman told AFP.

Most residents of this blue-collar town work in a major coke plant that has been heavily damaged by the shelling.

The town remained without electricity on Saturday and with only sporadic power supplies to heat homes against the freezing winter temperatures and limited supplies of water.

The giant plant provides electricity for much of the region and has been the target of previous deadly rebel attacks.

Abul Kashem

FROM PAGE 16

"I earned about Tk 1,000 a day here after paying the people from whom I borrowed a power supply line. I also gave a servicing identity card with my contact number to each customer when the customers handed in their phone sets," he said.

So how did Kashem come up with this innovative way to set up a business?

"I was a small grocery shopkeeper at Roumari bazar. I was not making enough money from my business at that time. While I sat in my shop, I noticed fellow villagers coming regularly to the bazar to re-charge their mobile phones. This gave me the idea," he said.

"At first I made a 100-point-charging set which I have now expanded to 250-points. I think this a lucrative business idea in all places where many people do not have power supply at their houses. Anyone can earn a regular income from doing what I do!" he said.

Trump's travel

FROM -PAGE 1

Robart, ruling in a lawsuit brought by the attorneys general of Washington state and Minnesota who sought to stop the order, said the states "have met their burden of demonstrating that they face immediate and irreparable injury as a result of the signing and implementation of the Executive Order."

He said the order adversely affects residents in areas of education, employment, education and freedom to travel.

The decision was met with swift denunciation by the White House -- which originally called it "outrageous" before removing that word in a statement issued minutes later -- and Trump himself, who blasted the judge personally yesterday morning.

"The opinion of this so-called judge, which essentially takes law-enforcement away from our country, is ridiculous and will be overturned!" he tweeted.

Trump also sent out a series of tweets lamenting the ruling.

"When a country is no longer able to say who can, and who cannot, come in & out, especially for reasons of safety & security - big trouble!" he tweeted.

Robart's ruling may have stung even more for the Trump administration because it came on the heels of its first legal victory over the travel ban. Hours earlier Friday, a federal judge in Boston issued a more limited ruling that declined to renew a temporary restraining order in Massachusetts, which would have prohibited the detention or removal of foreign travelers legally authorised to come to the Boston area.

But it was the sweeping ruling from Seattle that had the federal government scrambling.

VISAS TO BE REINSTATED

CBP alerted airlines on Friday night that the US government would quickly begin reinstating visas that were previously cancelled, and it advised airlines that refugees in possession of US visas will be admitted as well, an airline executive said.

Airlines were expected to remove travel alerts from their websites and get messages out to customers to alert them about the change.

It is possible there will be more court activity and an appeal before anyone could act on getting a visa, and it's unclear how long it would take to obtain one.

US airlines use an automated system connected to the Customs and Border Protection database to scan passports and visas to get an instant determination if the passenger can board or not. Unless the government reinstates visas and the airlines get a "board" status, the airlines still would not allow such passengers to board.

Airlines were adjusting to the new developments. Qatar Airways announced it will allow nationals from the seven countries affected by Trump's travel ban and all refugees presenting a valid, unexpired US visa or green card to travel to the United States.

REFUGEE GROUPS RELIEVED Refugee resettlement agencies across the US welcomed Robart's ruling.

refugees and Muslims was not only un-American, but Judge Robart found it to be unconstitutional," Mark Hetfield, president and CEO of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, told CNN yesterday. "Thanks to Judge Robart's order protecting the Constitution, thousands of refugees who were bound for the US can finally find protection -- and a warm welcome -- here."

"But this won't be the end of our fight to keep America's door open to refugees," he added.

Once a refugee is vetted and approved for resettlement, the agencies coordinate with the International Organizations for Migration to arrange their placement with a local chapter. The UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees is involved in that process, as are the Departments of State and Homeland Security, and the government of the country from which refugees are applying.

Resettlement agencies have been working with the State Department's Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration to determine when admissions can resume while local branches prepare to welcome the new arrivals.

Daniel Smith, an immigration attorney in Seattle, predicted a "flood of people trying to enter the US over the next few days" due to the legal opening.

"I am advising clients who are in the country now -- don't leave," Smith said. "And any clients wanting to enter the country, it's best if you try to get it right now and then stay put if you get here."

Suranjit

FROM PAGE 16

working properly. He was having some respiratory problems as well, said the doctor.

Asked whether the AL leader, 72, would be taken abroad for treatment, Saiful said he could not be taken anywhere until his condition improved.

Siddiqur Rahman, front desk accountant at the hospital, said Suranjit was at the coronary care unit (CCU) and was under the observation of Dr Boren Chakraborty.

After visiting the ailing leader for a while, his personal assistant Kamrul Haque told The Daily Star around 1:10am that his condition seemed "very bad".

Around half an hour later, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal also visited Suranjit and echoed Kamrul's views.

"If there is any scope for taking him abroad, he will be taken there," Kamal said.

Suranjit, a former railways minister, was admitted to the hospital on Friday. He would be taken to Singapore by an air ambulance today, Kamrul had said earlier in the night.

Suranjit has long been fighting cancer, said his family members.

He is the AL lawmaker from Sunamganj-2 constituency and a member of the party's advisory council. Also, he is the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the law, justice and parliamentary affairs ministry.

Louvre reopens 24 hours after machete attack

AFP, Paris

Art lovers returned to the Louvre in Paris yesterday, 24 hours after a soldier shot a machete-wielding attacker at the museum, believed to be an Egyptian who entered the country a week ago.

The incident on Friday thrust security and the terror threat back into the limelight three months before elections in France, with authorities saying it was a "terrorist" assault.

It also risked dealing another blow to Paris' lucrative tourism industry which has been badly affected by a

string of attacks since 2015.

At the Louvre on Saturday, a crowd had formed at the main entrance as the doors re-opened to the first visitors of the day on schedule at 09:30 am (0830 GMT).

"I'm quite worried about coming today, but as we weren't able to visit yesterday we decided to come back anyway," 28-year-old Russian visitor Elena Lordugan told AFP.

Soldiers in uniform with machine guns could be seen patrolling as usual, with routine bag checks also undertaken by Louvre security staff.