

# Local girls saved from early marriage

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Four school girls were saved from early marriage, thanks to timely intervention by the local administration in the Sahabganj upazila of the district yesterday.

Marriages of two of the girls were supposed to be held yesterday while parents of the others were preparing to marry them off soon, Assistant Commissioner (and) Moushumi Bain Hira said.

Having been informed by local people and the school administrations, she said, "we along with police went to Dupakanda village of the Sahabganj upazila around 2:30pm to stop the child marriages."

The suitor of one girl, Swapan Miaah, 30, was detained. Guardians of the other girls were brought to the upazila parishad. They are seventh and eighth graders of Sahabganj and Ichhamoyee Pilot Girls High School and eighth grade of Krishnagar Abdul Zabbar High School of the upazila.

Later, on information, marriage of another eighth grader was stopped at Krishnagar village of the upazila. The executive magistrate convinced the parents that their daughters should be allowed to continue their education. The guardians of the girls were also fined Tk 1,000 each. Moushumi added.

The detainee, Swapan Miaah was freed after he gave an undertaking and paid Tk 1,000 fine.

# Holy Ashura

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The meeting was held in the Islamic Foundation office at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque with Religious Affairs Secretary Anisur Rahman in the chair.

The committee decided that Hijri 1439 would commence tomorrow, and the 10th day of Muharram would fall on October 5 as the new moon was sighted yesterday.

At the meeting, Sheikh Faraz's forces on the 10th Muharram in the year of Hijri 610, Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA), his family members and close relations embraced martyrdom at Karbala to uphold the Islamic faith and the teachings of the prophet.

The government and different religious organisations planned various programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner. The day will be a public holiday.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes, while newspapers publish special pages highlighting the significance of the day.

# Force Myanmar

FROM PAGE 1

PM Sheikh Hasina said Secretary Ihsanul Karim was present.

"They [ Rohingyas ] have to go back to their homeland, create international pressure on Myanmar so that they take steps to bring their citizens back," Shaheed Haque quoted the PM.

The IOM DG thanked the Bangladesh PM for giving shelter to the Rohingyas refugees and informed her of the relief operation of IOM for Rohingyas.

Secretary Ihsanul Karim informed Hasina that he will visit Bangladesh on October 5-6.

During the briefing, Bangladesh Permanent Representative to UN Masud Bin Momen said a bilateral meeting will be held with UN President Kofi Annan and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was held at the UN Headquarters on the sidelines of the current session of the UN General Assembly.

She said Bangladesh and Estonia discussed strengthening cooperation between the two countries in the ICT sector.

President Carter apprised the PM of her country's digital progress over the last few years while Sheikh Hasina highlighted Bangladesh's recent success in the ICT sector.

Both the leaders were keen to share their experiences with each other and strengthen cooperation in the ICT sector to tap the potentials of the digital era.

The leaders also discussed other prospective areas of cooperation, foreign secretary Shahidul Haque said.

Waz's Advisor on ICT Affairs Saheb Wazed Joy was present on the occasion.

In the afternoon, the prime minister held a meeting with Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, also UN Secretary on financing.

The foreign secretary said Queen Maxima and Hasina discussed the Rohingya issue. The Netherlands Queen highly praised Bangladesh for its role in dealing with Rohingya issue.

# India presses on with Myanmar defence supplies

INDIA, New Delhi

India is considering supplying arms to Myanmar's government in a sign of strong support for a neighbour that faces criticism for its crackdown on Rohingya defence institutions.

The arms were discussed during a visit by the chief of Myanmar's navy, Indian officials said yesterday. The two sides also talked about training Myanmar sailors on top of the courses taught to its army officers at elite military defence institutions.

India's decision to supply defence military cooperation with its eastern neighbour appears part of a push to counter Chinese influence in the region.

On Wednesday, the commander-in-chief of the Myanmar navy Admiral Tin Aung San met Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitaraman and the chiefs of India's army, navy and air force.

The two sides are discussing the supply of defence patrol boats, a military official said. The Myanmar navy chief also visited the naval ship

building site in Mumbai as part of the four-day trip that ended yesterday.

India is factoring that cooperation into the East policy, and defence is a large part of the relationship, said the official.

In 2013, India offered to supply equipment such as artillery guns, radars and night vision devices to Myanmar's army. Since then, the focus has shifted to naval cooperation as India seeks to push back against Chinese influence in the region.

The two sides are expected to increase coordinated patrols in the Bay of Bengal that help the two navies operate together.

The fact that the Indian government is receiving a high level military officer at a time when the international community is criticising the military sends out a signal, said K Thome who specialises on India's neighbourly policy at the New Delhi-based Observer Research Foundation.

Thome said that India is wary with the Myanmar government so far as the Rohingya issue is concerned, he said.

# 'Model to militant'

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Brigade and Brigade Ad-Dar-e-Kutni. The Badr Squad Brigade carried out several attacks, including the Holey Arisan café attack in July last year, while the Brigade Ad-Dar-e-Kutni acted as a backup or reserved squad.

Mehedi was trying to rebuild the JMB as the Badr Squad Brigade was losing its strength due to anti-militancy drives by law enforcers, the Rab official told journalists.

Seeking anonymity, an official of the Bangladesh Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit at Dhaka Metropolitan Police said he heard Mehedi's name during investigations into militancy cases.

However, two other officials said that CTTC had no record of any JMB militant by the name of Imam Mehedi Hassan.

The Rab-3 CO said Mehedi is an "IT expert". He used social applications to maintain contact with other militants at home abroad.

He said the Rab collected some information after examining Mehedi's laptops. "We suspect Mehedi mainly contacted some funding sympathisers from abroad for funding military activities," he said.

The Rab on August 31 arrested three other JMB operatives from Tangail. During interrogation, they told law enforcers that they were invited to join the Brigade by Mehedi, he said.

According to Rab, Mehedi admitted that he had been involved with the JMB's Sarwar-Tamim group since 2015. He had been in contact with many top militants, including chief coordinator of the Gulshan café attack Tamim Chowdhury and one of the attackers Nisrullah Khan.

"Mehedi is quite capable of motivating young people in Dhaka, Tangail and Rajshahi; evaluated their allegiance to the militant outfit and swore loyalty to them. Later he uploaded videos of inspiring new members online to swear in others," Tuhin claimed.

Several militants, who were motivated by Mehedi, were killed during anti-militancy drives by law enforcers, he added.

Yesterday, the Rab claimed to have seized two laptops, a mobile phone, a passport and some books with extremist views from Mehedi's possession.

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# Identifying themselves as Rab men, they seized two laptops, one each from the office and home, and a non-functional CPU.

He saw two parked microbuses in front of their home when the men entered their house.

The family contacted police and the anti-mob Mechedi and Safen going missing, but the law enforcers could not trace them.

Hailing from Patakhali's Baulal upazila, Mehedi completed SSC and HSC in Barisal. He then moved to Bangladesh to get admitted to Darul Uloom University.

Son of a former assistant inspector of police, Mehedi is the youngest of six siblings. His passion for modelling was first noticed by his family in 2011, but the family didn't like it.

Two years later, he quit modeling and started a business.

"He became frustrated after incurring losses and started visiting a local mosque regularly. Since then he didn't shave," Waliur told The Daily Star.

Mehedi got married in 2015 and his wife is expecting a baby next month.

Waliur was shocked at the news of his brother's arrest. "My family will be ashamed for Mehedi if he is really involved in militancy."

# Trump orders

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"For much too long North Korea has been allowed to abuse the international financial system to facilitate funding for its nuclear weapons and missile programs," Trump said.

The US did not mention its pinging of oil trade. Four sources told Reuters China's central bank has told banks to strictly implement United Nations sanctions against North Korea.

The UN Security Council has unanimously imposed nine rounds of sanctions on North Korea since 2006, the latest earlier this month capping fuel supplies to the isolated state.

Earlier on Thursday, South Korean President Moon Jae-in, sitting with Trump and his respective delegations, said the US president's warning to Pyongyang in his speech at the UN on Tuesday "will also help to change North Korea."

Trump warned North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in his address that the United States, if threatened, would "totally destroy" his country of 26 million people.

It was Trump's most direct military threat to attack North Korea and his latest expression of concern about Pyongyang's repeated launching of ballistic missiles over Japan and underground nuclear tests.

North Korea's foreign minister likened Trump to a "barking dog" in response.

On Thursday, South Korea's Moon said sanctions were needed to bring Pyongyang to the negotiating table and to give up its nuclear program, but Seoul was not seeking North Korea's collapse.

Moon said all countries must strictly adhere to UN sanctions on North Korea and impose tougher steps in the event of new provocations by Pyongyang.

In Geneva, North Korea told a UN rights panel that international sanctions would endanger the survival of North Korean children.

Earlier yesterday South Korea approved a plan to send \$8 million worth of aid to North Korea, as China warned the crisis on the Korean peninsula was getting more serious by the day.

# 9,000 logged

FROM PAGE 1

The girl whose father has been killed by the Myanmar army. Like the two kids, tens of thousands of Rohingya children would have their biometric registration later.

Contacted, Director General of Department of Immigration and Passports Brig Masud Redwan said the authorities would start the biometric registration of the children once they were done with the registration of other refugees.

He said the registration would be carried out through retina scanning as they preferred not to take fingerprints of children for the registration.

The UNICEF estimates almost half of over 400,000 Rohingyas refugees in Bangladesh are children.

Nearly 3,000 Rohingyas had their registration done at the Naya Para camp after the listing being done on September 14.

"We are taking their names and addresses in Myanmar, date of arrival here, age and parents' name for the registration," said Lt Col Md Mizanur Rahman Khan, in-charge of the registration centre.

He said they had only 12 computers at the centre and that was why they were taking time for the task. The staff of the centre also was complaining about load shedding, he said.

District administration office sources said another 6,000 refugees were registered at the Kutupalong camp, which began the registration on September 12.

The administration would open two more camps in Balukhali and Thingkhali for the work soon, said the sources.

At a press conference at his ministry yesterday, Disaster Management and Relief Minister Maya said, "From today, 30 registration booths are operating to speed up the biometric registration process."

# 3 months

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murder of a local Jubo League leader. Eleven families are living at Longdu Government High School while some others in temporary houses built with bamboo and wood beside their burnt-down houses.

Santi Moy Chakma, chief of Longdu Mouza, said the government is not sincere about rehabilitating the arson victims.

"Many representatives of the high authorities of the government came here and assured us of rebuilding our houses as soon as possible. But three months have gone. The rehabilitation work has not even begun."

The victims should rehabilitate themselves on their own land immediately, Santi Moy Chakma added.

Earlier on July 13, the administration gave Tk 6,000, two blankets, 30kg rice and two bundles of corrugated iron sheet to each victim family, said Mini Chakma, an inhabitant of Tintila village.

"Then they assured us again and again that our houses would be rebuilt soon. But they haven't done it yet. How long will we live like this?" said a frustrated Mini.

While indigenous families want new home, Kelvin Chakma, a student of class seven of Rabeta Model High School, has been trying hard to shake off his shock and trauma from witnessing the violence carried out by Banglades.

He does not go to school now. "It seems they can attack us again, anytime," he boy said.

On June 1, the body of Longdu Jubo League leader Nurul Islam Nayan was found four miles from Khagrachari Sadar Upazila along Dighinala Khagrachhari road. He had travelled to Khagrachari on a motorbike with a passenger.

The next day, on June 2, Banglades brought out a procession at Longdu Batyapara and a mourning procession at Longdu Sadar. When protesters were marching in procession, some rowdy Banglades started setting indigenous houses on fire. The attack spread over four villages leaving 224 houses gone.

The local administration has received Tk 25 lakh for rehabilitation purpose from the social welfare ministry, said the UNO, adding that the money would be distributed soon.

"I think the victims' rehabilitation will begin soon," he said.

# Dealers go rogue

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government warehouses in time. "I didn't see anyone selling OMS rice on Wednesday," said Abbas Ali, who runs a grocery shop in front of the OMS shop of Razbar Rahman, one of the three dealers.

The dealer Salam Biswas, food controller in the upazila, however, claimed that the OMS rice was sold in the presence of field officials.

"The monitoring officials did not report any irregularity," he said. Contacted, the monitoring officials, however, came up with confusing statements.

Ruhul Amin, upazila youth development officer, said he didn't go to the OMS shop of dealer Rustum Ali at Durgapur Bazar on Wednesday, as the dealer had told him that.

Ruhul said he would sit outside the shop. Kibria signed Wednesday's sale record of one tonne of OMS rice though the locals alleged that no OMS rice was sold at the shop that day.

Kibria said he put his signature on the sale record and bought rice from Rustum, who has blessings of local leaders of the ruling party.

Rustum, however, refuted the allegations and claimed that OMS rice was sold properly on Wednesday.

There were also conflicting statements from another dealer, Bazarul Rahman, in Shaligaria area as the official tasked with monitoring the OMS sale.

Bazul claimed that he had sold one tonne of rice in two hours from 3:00pm to 5:00pm on Wednesday, but monitoring official Sula-ud-Doula said he took place between 9:00am and 10:00pm.

Locals in the area, however, said no OMS rice was sold at the outlet that day.

Asked, Abdus Salam, district food controller for Naogaon and Rajshahi, told The Daily Star that he was not right away that what is happening in Rajshahi, as lam in Naogaon."

Salam has been carrying out the additional duty of Rajshahi district food controller for the last eight months as the government is yet to appoint food controller there.

Salam said he would look into the allegations. In Rajshahi city, this correspondent visited the shop of dealer Golam Sarker at C&B intersection on Wednesday afternoon.

The dealer said he began OMS rice sale at 3:00pm and closed his shop at 6:00pm.

Sarker also said he had sold 35 kg houses.

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of rice from 3:00pm to 4:00pm. He, however, showed a paper that he sold 500 kg of rice that day.

Buyers in the city complained of difficulty in finding OMS shops, as some of the dealers didn't operate at the scheduled places. They alleged that the dealers deliberately did so to deceive the customers and sell the rice later on at black market.

The shop of dealer Wahedulla was found at Shahadpur New Market, two km from the scheduled shop at New City Bhaban intersection, while the outlet of another dealer, Prodig Kabiraj, was found at Resompatti, around 500 metres away from the scheduled Ahurapara.

The outlet of dealer Amjad Hossain was inside a saw mill at the Match Factory Intersection, instead of the scheduled place at BSCIC Intersection.

Dealer Wahed said that since they are well-known OMS dealers, the buyers would not have any difficulty to find them.

This year, the OMS dealers in the city are selling rice at shops, not from trucks as they did in the past, on the excuse that it costs much higher to sell rice from trucks, say rice officials.

4,000 TONNES OF RICE SEIZED

A mobile court yesterday seized around 4,000 tonnes of rice from a warehouse in Chittagong city and detained its manager for hoarding rice.

The mobile court, led by Executive Magistrate Syed Morad, raided the warehouse of Abulhasan Trading in the port city's Sagonika BSCIC area around 2:00pm.

Warehouse Manager Abu Taber was detained for hoarding the coarse rice, brought from Myanmar by importer Masud and Brothers, at the warehouse for 39 days, said the magistrate.

"According to the law, a warehouse can keep goods of any firm for only a month. But Ahmed Trading was found hoarding 4,000 tonnes of rice of Masud and Brothers for 39 days," Morad said.

The warehouse was sealed off, and the rice was handed over to Paharali Police Station, he added.

Earlier on Wednesday, a mobile court carried out a drive in the port city's Narikelota area and fined a warehouse Tk 10,000 for stocking 2,154 sacks of rice for 39 days.

The drive was for warning a mobile court of the manager of a business concern Tk 1 lakh for storing rice illegally in Chaktia area.

# Guardian tree of Faridpur

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gifts of beauty and of contemplation. A signboard informs the visitors that the tree is a hundred years old.

"This tree is like a guardian angel," says one local, Omar Ali. "It brings many benefits and we are proud of it. It's a tree that's old enough to have attracted superstition. If anyone cuts a branch of this tree, Omar Ali says, it must be old. My family used to suffer."

The person and its species well-suited to wetlands, often growing in haor-areas where the tree's trunk is submerged for several days in the same condition, so they provide good shelter for migratory and other bird species, along with other types of animals hoping to escape the mangle of the trees, as a traditional remedy for headaches, tumours and fungal infections. Its bark is known to help with coughs and rheumatism. Hijol wood is also used for boat building.

"I don't know who planted the tree or if it just grew naturally," says another 65-year old elderly local, Hatam Mollah. "But my father told me he also saw this tree in the same condition, so it must be old. Our family used to own the land on which the tree is situated, but now we don't. The forest office takes care of the tree." He says up to 100 people per day visit the tree. "I can't see, it is twenty-five feet high and has a trunk of fourteen-foot diameter."

According to another villager, Mithun Kumar Das, many locals make use of the tree, for example, to use seed and bark for medicinal purposes," he says. "We want the government to take steps to make this a tourist spot and ensure the tree's preservation. I hope that it will survive for many more years."

"I've never seen a hijol tree like this one," says one visitor, Jahirul Hossain from Bontpara village in adjacent Moulvibazar. "It's really amazing. It's a tree for everyone."

"There are a few hundred years trees in our country," says Maksudur, district chairman of a conservation organisation. "The government should take care for this tree and all the other trees that remain. We should also generate public awareness to protect the tree."

The chairman of the upazila union council, Fakir Baylath Hossain, doesn't need much convincing. "This hijol tree is a hundred years old and it is an asset to our locality. I want the government to develop the site for tourism."

Faridpur's divisional office of the social forest division Md Anwarul Haque is likewise to be counted among

the tree's many admirers. "It's an asset not only locally but a national asset," he says. "Old trees like this one transpire huge amounts of water through their leaves which helps in rain fall. They provide oxygen, improving air quality. They protect the soil and support wildlife. Every effort should be made to preserve this tree."

Some 100 to 200 kilometres from Faridpur and five km from the Ramkhondo Government Primary School on the Dhaka to Khulna highway, the way to the tree is well signposted.

# Emotional'

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socially to be polite, empathetic, and maybe have their own sense of humour," she said.

The ENSTA robots detect emotions and change their behaviour accordingly. "First, it looks at the body language, for example whether someone's gender and personality in 75 percent of cases simply by shaking hands."

"We are first developing a model of how to interact with a robot, capable of detecting and interacting with individuals, and based on this model we are able to infer the personality trait and the gender," Dr Tapus told Mail Online.

For example when they can judge a person of our social status, "Tapus said, "or of the arm and how much they move their hand."

"We could show that during a female to male handshake both participants make less pressure than for a male to male handshake," Dr Tapus said.

The other features show that female handshakes are longer and have a lower frequency.

Which is also notable is that the hand of the male receiver is pointing down when he handshakes a female participant, researchers believe this could be due to the fact that female participants are on average smaller.

The team have also studied emotion recognition as part of a project to help people suffering with Autistic Syndrome Disorder.

If we can simulate a human like emotion response from a robot we can ensure a two-way relationship, benefiting the most vulnerable and isolated members of our society," Tapus said.

People with ASD often have difficulty recognizing social stimuli but past research has shown that they find it more easy to interact with robots.