

SSC students must be in halls 30 mins before exam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The examinees of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and its equivalent exams will not be allowed to enter their respective exam halls if they fail to reach at least 30 minutes before the exam begins, said a press release of the education ministry.

The ministry took the decision at a meeting held by a committee formed to give recommendations on public exams to prevent copying or any other forms of cheating.

Earlier, the education ministry issued similar directives before the Junior School Certificate (JSC) and equivalent exams were held in November last year.

At the time, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid had said that

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SEX TRAFFICKING

Police rescue teenage girl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police yesterday rescued a 14-year-old girl, who was allegedly forced into the sex trade, from Chittagong city's Aturar Dipo area.

A woman named Ankhi, 34, was detained in connection with this incident.

"The victim from Kishoreganj was rescued from a flat in Aturar Dipo area around 5:00pm with the help of locals," said Abul Kalam Azad, officer-in-charge of Bayezid Police Station.

Akram Hossen, who informed police of the girl, told The Daily Star that his brother-in-law Din Islam, 32, a contractor, brought the girl to Chittagong city from Kishoreganj around two months ago, promising her a job in a garment factory.

Din Islam, who is from Kishoreganj, took the girl to his home in Aturar Dipo area and "raped" her for one month and later handed her over to Ankhi, who forced the victim into a sex trade she run in her house for the last one month, said Akram, quoting the victim.

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About 30 Hindu families, who had fled the violence in Rakhine State, are now living in shanties like this in Hindupara of Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PINAKI ROY

Everyone here in the dark

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about it, the officials said.

The first meeting of the Bangladesh-Myanmar Joint Working Group (JWG) would be held in Naypyitaw by January 15 and the detailed arrangements for the repatriation would be finalised there, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam told reporters earlier.

Commissioner Mohammed Abul Kalam Azad of the Rohingya, Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC), who is also a member of the JWG, said they know nothing about 450 Hindus going back first.

"We did not get any official proposal and we have not agreed to send only 450 people in the first batch,"

said Kalam.

"We are yet to sit for the first meeting of the joint committee [JWG]. The date and venue of the first meeting is yet to be fixed," he said.

Kalam said they would hand over a list of one lakh refugees to Myanmar representative in the JWG meeting.

He said the returnees would be randomly picked. "We are not going to discriminate by religion, sex or age."

As per the agreement, UNHCR, the UN's agency for refugees, would be involved in the process, he said.

At the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, there was no sign that the Hindus would be the first in line to go back.

"I just heard it from journalists. But nobody from any government office or from any UN agency contacted us about repatriation," said Shisupal Shil, majhi (village chief) of Hindu refugees.

Shisupal said the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) had made 80 tents for them and they were waiting for 20 more to be built.

"We are 101 families. When they finish constructing the tents, toilets and tube wells, we will move in," he said.

All Madhuram Shil, a barber, could only bring his scissors, shaving brush and a few other instruments from Myanmar. He has been living at the Kutupalong Hindupara

with his 15-member family for last four months.

He set up a small barber shop there as he does not know when he would be able to go back home.

Asked why they were making tents for the Hindus when there was a possibility that they would be the first to go back, an IOM official at the camp said he did not know that these refugees would be going back so soon.

"We are making the tents because the government requested us to make arrangements for these people."

Bangladesh government has made a database of 923,000 Rohingyas, with fingerprints and other necessary information.

Hunger strikers stay resolute

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the fast unto death in front of the Jatiya Press Club, demanding inclusion of around 80,000 teachers and employees of 5,242 government-recognised educational institutions in the MPO.

The strike, which rolled into its fourth day yesterday, saw a huge number of participants, who vowed to continue the demonstration until the government gives a specific timeframe for meeting their demand.

On Tuesday, the agitating teachers rejected the education minister's call to end the programme and announced to continue it until death.

"After the education minister, none from the government has talked to us. So, we will continue our agitation," Golam Mahmudunnabi, president of Non-MPO Shikhyia Pratishthan Shikhyak Karmachari Federation, told this correspondent around 8:00pm yesterday.

The strike, however, is taking a toll on the participants, since they have to spend the winter nights out in the open.

Until yesterday, 75 more teachers, including Golam and the federation's General Secretary Binoy Bhushan Roy, fell ill. Binoy was even hospitalised, said platform leaders.

MPO is the government's share in the payroll of non-government educational institutions. Under the scheme, the government gives 100 percent basic salaries to the teachers of non-government schools. The teachers also get a lump sum amount as other allowances through the MPO.

As per the rules, the educational institutions first come under MPO facilities and then the government includes the teachers in the payroll.

Currently, more than four lakh teachers and employees of more than 26,340 secondary schools, colleges, madrasas and technical institutes are receiving MPO facilities.

After a suspension of six years by the then BNP-led alliance government, the Awami League-led government revived the MPO facility in 2010 as per its electoral pledge and included 1,624 private secondary and higher secondary schools and colleges in the MPO scheme.

The rest of the non-MPO teachers have been staging various demonstrations for MPO facilities since then.

After staging a sit-in for five consecutive days at the Jatiya Press Club, the agitating teachers started the hunger strike on December 31.

Yesterday, some of the teachers were



Rabeya

seen giving speeches at the protest venue, pleading with the government to meet their demand.

A number of political and teachers' platforms expressed solidarity with the movement.

A COMMON STORY

Like other protesters, Rabeya is very adamant about not going back home. She turned down requests from her relatives and former students to go to their homes and take rest.

Sitting on the road, she wrote a number of lyrics, expressing the demand, and composed them instantly. She sang the songs on loudspeakers.

"Dayal Bondhu Re, Nisthur Ei Samajer Majhe, Lanchito r Banchito Shikhhakder Kotaho Nei Thai [...in this cruel society, the deprived teachers have nowhere to go]," she sang.

Referring to Nahid's Tuesday's assurance that they would look into the matter, Rabeya later said, "We don't want any more assurances. We want that the prime minister announces a timeframe for our inclusion in the MPO."

Rabeya's tale is not uncommon as many of the other agitating teachers have been going through the same. All of them had the same grievance -- they were being deprived of their rightful salaries.

Aminul Haque, headmaster of Chararial Khan Junior High School in Faridpur's Sadarpur, said he did not get any pay for the last 22 years. He even had to sell his land to run his family.

He said seven other teachers and staffers of the school, established in 1995, were going through similar hardship. The number of students there is 175.

Asked why he was still doing the job without pay, he said, "I do that because it gives me pleasure and honour at the same time. The hope of coming under the MPO is also my driving force."

EDUCATION MINISTRY'S MOVE

The education ministry has already started the groundwork for forming a committee, which will come up with a new policy on MPO after bringing some amendments to the existing policy, said an official.

The official said the committee would comprise officials from the education, finance and public administration ministries.

All the 5,242 educational institutions will not be included in the MPO scheme. Before the inclusion, the committee will examine the eligibility of the institutions to get the benefits.

It will take into account the number of students, their pass rate, and whether the institution is at all needed in that particular area, said the official.

"The committee will recommend that the MPO is given on a priority basis," he added.

Tapan Kanti Chakma, but his mobile phone was found switched off.

The police are still investigating the murder; a case is yet to be filed.

Earlier, on December 16, Anol Bikash Chakma alias Pluto Chakma, 42, a resident of Kawkhali upazila in Rangamati and a leader of Bandukbhanga union UPDF was shot dead. Another UPDF leader, Anoti Ranjan Chakma, was shot dead in Bogachhori area of Naniarchar upazila in Rangamati on December 5.



Anwar Hossain Manju
Water Resources Minister



Rashed Khan Menon
Social Welfare Minister



Anisul Islam Mahmud
Environment and Forests
Minister



Narayon Chandra Chanda
Fisheries and Livestock
Minister



Shahjahan Kamal
Civil Aviation
and Tourism Minister



Mustafa Jabbar
Posts, Telecommunications
and IT Minister



Tarana Halim
State Minister for
Information



Kazi Keramat Ali
State Minister for Education
(Technical, Madrasa)

Surprises in reshuffle

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committee on civil aviation, added the presidium member.

The portfolio of Forest and Environment Minister Anwar Hossain Manju has been swapped with that of Water Resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud.

Besides, State Minister for Posts and Telecommunications Tarana Halim has been shifted to the information ministry.

But none of them had any knowledge about the coming changes in their portfolios, as the PM didn't tell them about the move to bring further dynamism to the administration, said sources in the cabinet and the AL.

Moreover, State Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed, who was in charge of the social welfare ministry, will no longer be at the helm of the ministry, according to a gazette notification issued by the Cabinet Division yesterday.

Earlier on June 19 last year, Nuruzzaman, who held the portfolio of state minister for food, was made state minister for social welfare following the demise of Promote Mankin.

Narayon Chandra Chanda, who was promoted to a full minister on Tuesday, has been given the charge of the fisheries and livestock ministry where he had been a junior minister

since the formation of the present cabinet in 2014.

On Tuesday, the PM made a sudden change in her council of ministers. She added three new faces to her cabinet, raising the total number of its members to 54.

Apart from them, there are five advisers and a special envoy to the PM with the status of full minister.

Of the three new faces inducted into the cabinet on Tuesday, IT expert Mustafa Jabbar has been made posts, telecommunications and information technology minister, and Rajbari-1 lawmaker Kazi Keramat Ali the state minister for technical and madrasa education.

Contacted, an AL presidium member said they were surprised and still in the dark about the reasons behind the changes in portfolios of the ministers and state ministers, especially that of Menon.

"Though Rashed Khan Menon was not doing very well [as the civil aviation and tourism minister], he was not doing that bad either. This is our evaluation. The man who replaced him is a new face without any experience in the sector. We don't know from what perspective, the honourable prime minister made the change," said the presidium member wishing anonymity.

'Raped' girl kills herself

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Failing to endure the shock of being "raped" by her uncle, a 13-year-old schoolgirl took her life in Madhya Charadi village of Barisal's Bakerganj upazila, said the victim's family.

The dead, Sonia Akthar, daughter of Dulal Khan, was a class-VII student of Sher-e-Bangla Secondary High School.

Victim's elder sister Suraiya Akthar Moni said their family had good relations with their uncle Asad Khan's family.

Quoting her sister, Suraiya, a college student, said on December 27 last year, Asad, 27, asked her sister to go to his house to fry an egg when other members of her family were not home.

When Sonia was busy frying eggs, Asad closed the door, gagged and raped her. After the incident, she returned home and set fire to herself after pouring kerosene on her body, Suraiya said.

"My younger sister was traumatised by the incident and she committed suicide," she added.

Victim's father Dulal said Sonia was taken to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

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ICBM made

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hitting the US mainland.

"The ice sculpture recalled the November incident which had caused tremendous excitement for tens of millions of soldiers and people," the papers said.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un used his annual New Year address to warn he has a "nuclear button" on his table, but reached out to Seoul and appealed for warmer ties, in a move that could presage something of a thaw in relations between the two.

Pyeongyang said yesterday it reopened a hotline with Seoul to discuss attending the Winter Olympics in the South.

Kim's comments came after a year that saw multiple missile launches by the North and its sixth and most powerful nuclear test -- purportedly of a hydrogen bomb.

Other sculptures on display at the Pyongyang Ice Sculpture Festival, which opened on Kim Il-Sung Square on Sunday, included North Korean landmarks, dolphins, a fishing boat and a tractor.

UPDF leader shot dead

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brother Bagish Chakma.

After hearing of the incident, the police rushed to the scene and sent Mithun to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

In a statement, UPDF Central General Secretary Ravi Shankar Chakma blamed the UPDF (Democratic) for the killing. He said the "Mukhosh Bahini" in Khagrachhari killed Mithun. He praised Mithun's courageous role in the anti-land grab

movement in Chittagong Hill Tracts during the emergency.

After the assassination of Mithun, panic gripped Khagrachhari town.

In the afternoon, UPDF's associate organisation Democratic Youth Forum, Pahari Chhatra Parishad and Hill Women's Federation brought out a procession in Khagrachhari town. The procession demanded immediate arrest of the killers.

Meanwhile, The Daily Star tried to contact UPDF (Democratic) convenor