



Algerian security forces use water cannons to disperse students taking part in an anti-government demonstration in the capital Algiers, yesterday. Lawmakers named the speaker of the upper house as Algeria's first new president in two decades yesterday, after the resignation of Abdelaziz Bouteflika following mass protests. PHOTO: AFP

Street kids

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tagged with local thugs, who use them to collect recyclable materials like plastic bottles or engage them in income generating works like being helpers or cleaners in the launches or restaurants.

In return, they get about Tk 100 a day and are allowed to sleep in the open at the launch terminals.

During a visit on March 10, many boys between the ages of 6 to 12 were seen sorting collected materials under the terminal gangplank around 10:30 in the morning. A social worker involved in operating an open school set out to convince the children into joining day classes.

One among them told the woman in a low voice that he had to finish his work before going to school. "Otherwise, 'bapjan' will be angry."

The children's handlers remain nearby to keep a close watch on their activities, said Suddho Sarker, coordinator of a programme in that area under LEEDO. "They [whom the children call 'bapjan'] don't like children joining classes at open schools. They fear that will lose control over them."

In a recent study across Dhaka, Suddho said that LEEDO found 75 percent of the street children were involved in child labour. The three other major risk factors that such children are exposed to are early marriage, drug abuse and reproductive health issues.

In another study in 2011 styled "Lives and livelihoods on the streets of Dhaka city", non-government organisation Brac observed that abuse and harassment by hoodlums and law-enforcement agencies were perceived to be the most severe problems affecting street life in Dhaka.

So far, there has been no initiative to conduct a national survey on street children.

The women and children affairs ministry and the social welfare ministry had a plan to conduct such a survey in Dhaka in February 2016, and rehabilitate the children within six months.

On March 21, Muhammad Abul Khair, public relations officer of the children affairs ministry, said the plan was yet to be implemented. "A process is on."

It is necessary to provide street children with government support to keep them from getting into the world of crimes, said SM Nazmul Hoque, a lawyer working in Brac's Human Rights and Legal Aid Services Programme.

They said Myanmar's attacks on civilians "may constitute war crimes."

They should get an opportunity to reach their potential, he added.

Nazmul worked in a programme that the government implemented between 2014 and 2016, in coordination with Brac, designed to rescue street children and accommodate them in government shelters until their families were traced.

At that time, 124 boys, mostly below 12, were returned to their families. There was however, little follow-up action to ensure that they were given the care they needed and that they were not back on the streets after a while.

Such was the case of Rima, a child victim turned sex worker. Rima, now in her 30s, returned home several times only to find no solace amongst her poverty-stricken family in Patuakhali.

She keeps her profession a secret from her five-year-old son. She sets out after midnight looking for clients and goes back to her sleeping child at any corner of Sadarghat after the Fajr prayers early in the morning.

"I lived out here my whole life I want a good future for my son," she said.

In the absence of any government intervention for their rehabilitation, Rabeya's six-month-old son and five-year-old daughter also face a long, never ending path of uncertainty.

[The names of the girls have been changed to protect their identities]

Cops to protect 7 killed

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chemicals could not be sprayed on fruits.

The inspector general of police, the director general of Rapid Action Battalion and the chairman of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) have been asked to submit a report to the court after complying with its directives in 30 days.

The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahsan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the order following a supplementary writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB).

During the hearing on the petition, HRPB lawyer Manzill Murshid told the court that following a writ petition, the HC on February 29, 2012, had issued several directives on the government to stop spraying of hazardous chemicals on fruits and to take action against those responsible for using chemicals.

But some dishonest people were reportedly spraying hazardous chemicals on fruits, particularly on mangoes, during the harvesting seasons, he said.

Manzill prayed to the HC to pass necessary orders to stop this practice.

On February 29, 2012, the HC in its verdict directed police to file criminal cases under the Special Powers Act, 1974, against those using chemicals to ripen or preserve fruits.

According to the act, the maximum punishment for the offence is death.

The court asked the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the customs department to monitor land and sea ports through which fruits are imported. It said the NBR and the customs would test imported fruits at ports to find out whether those were free from chemicals.

If they find any contaminated fruit, they must not allow them to enter the country, said the court.

Mentioning that the use of chemicals to ripen and preserve fruits is illegal, the HC ordered the BSTI and the law enforcers to constantly monitor fruit depots across the country to prevent storage and sale of contaminated fruits.

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magistrate Topeshwar Verma said.

In a separate attack, unknown gunmen burst into a hospital in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir and killed Chandrakant Sharma, a regional leader of a Hindu group linked to the BJP, along with his bodyguard, a police official said.

Authorities imposed an indefinite curfew in the town of Kishtwar, bordering the contested Muslim-majority region of Kashmir claimed by both India and Pakistan, and sent troops to the area.

Sharma, 48, was a leader of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the influential parent organisation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP.

He was flown to a hospital at the Government Medical College in

Jammu but died there, senior police officer Angrez Singh Rana said.

"He was the centre of hope and trust for a patriotic society that is against terrorism," said Manmohan Vaidya, general secretary of the RSS.

Last November, Sharma's close associate Anil Parihar, 52, a leader of the BJP, and his brother Ajeet, 55, were also killed in Kishtwar.

The issue of Kashmir looms large in India's multi-phase general election after a February suicide attack that killed 40 Indian paramilitary troopers was claimed by a militant group based in Pakistan.

Voting in south Kashmir, bordering the area where Sharma was killed, will happen in phases, to reduce the risk of attack by militants battling for independence from India.

UN contradicts

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yesterday.

This year, the military has turned its attention towards the Arakan Army, a Buddhist insurgent group that seeks political autonomy for Rakhine state.

More than 20,000 civilians have been displaced by the fighting.

According to villagers in the state's Buthidaung township, army helicopters fired on Rohingya labourers while they were collecting bamboo on Wednesday.

The army later confirmed the attack and placed the death toll at six.

The army-run newspaper Myawady said the victims were "together with terrorists while the army was cracking down on the Arakan Army's terrorist activities," but the OHCHR rejected that accusation.

They said Myanmar's attacks on civilians "may constitute war crimes."

Murder suspect

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During primary interrogation Saiful informed police of the whereabouts of the murder weapon. Following the information, police conducted a raid in Bakalia area, with Saiful, to recover the murder weapon, he claimed.

Sensing police presence, Saiful's cohorts opened fire, forcing the law enforcers to retaliate, he added.

The "gunfight" left Saiful dead on the spot, he claimed, adding that the body was sent to Chattogram Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Police also claimed to have recovered a light gun (LG) and two bullets.

Two police officials - Sub-inspector Karimuzzaman and Assistant Sub-inspector Alamgir -- were also injured during the "gunfight", he said, adding the duo received primary treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the police claims.

London charging

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as well as causing thousands of premature deaths every year, the release says.

"This is a landmark day for our city. Our toxic air is an invisible killer responsible for one of the biggest national health emergencies of our generation," Khan said in the statement.

"The ULEZ is the centrepiece of our plans to clean up London's air -- the boldest plans of any city on the planet, and the eyes of the world are on us."

Under new rules introduced Monday, polluting vehicles will be discouraged from entering the ULEZ thanks to a daily charge of £12.50 (around \$16) for some cars, vans and motorbikes and £100 (\$130) for trucks, buses and coaches.

The zone will cover the same area as the existing Congestion Charge -- collected from drivers in the city centre -- until 2021, when it will be expanded to cover the area between the major orbital roads known as the North and South Circular.

Drivers can check whether their vehicle meets ULEZ emission stan-

dards using an online tool provided by travel authority Transport for London.

The ULEZ is the next stage in a plan to clean up London's air, which started with the so-called T-charge -- an extra charge for highly polluting vehicles in the city centre -- introduced in February 2017. Since then, the number of vehicles entering the zone has fallen by around 11,000 per day, according to official figures, and there has been a 55% increase in emissions-compliant vehicles in the zone.

London's famous red bus fleet is also being updated as part of these efforts, and all 9,200 vehicles will meet or exceed ULEZ standards by October 2020, according to the mayor's office.

As things stand, some 2 million Londoners live in areas where nitrogen dioxide levels are above legal limits set by the European Union. However, these measures will ensure that air pollution will meet legal requirements in six years, according to an analysis by academics at King's College London.

Female

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at least second class or equivalent CGPA.

According to the new guideline, people aged between 21 and 30 would be eligible to apply for the posts.

Earlier, people aged between 18 and 30 were eligible for assistant teacher post and people aged between 25 and 35 were eligible for headmaster post.

The new guideline also said a total of 60 percent of the posts would be allocated for female candidates while 20 percent would be kept for dependents and 20 percent for male candidates.

Besides, 65 percent in-service teachers would be employed as headmasters through promotions and 35 percent would be recruited directly. All the assistant teachers would be recruited directly.

An assistant teacher with seven years of experience would be eligible for promotion to become headmaster.

Meanwhile, the assistant teachers of primary schools have come to the streets repeatedly with a demand of upgrading their basic salary from Tk 9,500 to Tk 12,500, which means upgrading them on the 11th grade of the wage board from the 14th grade.

According to the Directorate of Primary Education, there are 64,122 government primary schools in the country. Around 3.43 lakh teachers are teaching at those in country.

Of 3.43 lakh teachers, 2.15 lakh are women.



An aerial view taken yesterday shows the Karun River which has burst its banks in Ahvaz, the capital of Iran's southwestern province of Khuzestan which has been badly affected by flooding over the past few weeks. Iran has been hit by several weeks of unprecedented flooding across most of the usually arid country killing more than 70 people. PHOTO: AFP

Bus owners

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Shamsul Haque Reza told The Daily Star.

The SC chamber judge may hold hearing on the petition of the owners association today, he added.

Meanwhile, senior SC lawyer advocate Abdul Matin Khasru, also a former law minister, yesterday told reporters that he refused to move the petition on behalf of Bangladesh Bus Owners Association.

Earlier on April 4, the HC ordered Green Line Paribahan to pay Tk 50 lakh to Russell by April 10 (today), saying that it would pass an order for confiscation of buses if the transport company did not pay the money within the time frame.

The HC also asked the company not to sell tickets for April 11 (tomorrow) if it failed to pay the money.

Russell was knocked down by a Green Line bus near Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover in the capital's Dholaipar on April 28 last year.

The incident happened after an altercation broke out between Russell and the bus driver over rear-ending his car. As Russell chased down the bus, the bus driver ran him over.

Blast in Yemen

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in the face of a rebel offensive.

Human rights groups say the real death toll is several times higher.

The conflict has pushed millions of Yemenis to the brink of mass starvation, in what the UN has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Both sides stand accused of actions that could amount to war crimes. The coalition has been blacklisted by the UN for the killing of children.

Saudi Arabia and its allies accuse the Huthis of using civilians as human shields in densely populated areas.

4 of a family

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Ratna Akter, elder sister of the girls, said they had a long-running dispute over a piece of land with their neighbours. She said she suspected that the crime was committed by them.

When contacted, Mohsinul Kabir, officer-in-charge of Raipura Police Station, said there were back-to-back murders in the area a few years ago, in which brothers of the girls -- Sohag and Biplob -- were the accused and on the run.

"We are trying to find out whether this incident is connected to the murders or whether it was done by someone else," he added.

Shuffling personnel just to make do

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"I'm feeling like I'm unemployed. In the last one year, I did not join anywhere else only because I wanted to join here," said one of the 152 candidates.

Contacted, DGFP's Director General Kazi Mustafa Sarwar refused to make any comment regarding the delay in recruitment.

Contacted, GM Saleh Uddin, secretary of the medical education and welfare division under the health and family planning ministry, said the issuance of gazette notification for the 152 medical officers was taking time as their freedom fighters' certificates were being verified.

"It will be published within a day or two," he said.

Medical officers (doctos) play a crucial role in the family planning centres. They conduct the delivery of critical patients and implement permanent and temporary birth control methods that include ligation, vasectomy and implantation.

According to the DGFP website, it has been operating 61 Mother and Child Welfare Centers (MCWC) units at the district level, 427 Maternal Child Health and Family Planning (MCHFP) units at the upazila level, 3924 Union Health and Family Welfare Centres at the union level, and 12,217 community clinics. It also provides services by organising 30,000 satellite clinics every month throughout the country.

Along with the medical officers, family planning assistants (FPAs), family welfare volunteers (FWVs) and sub-assistant community medical officers (SACMOs) play vital roles in these centres.

The DGFP official said there were fewer people than required in all the above-mentioned positions.

In February this year, the DGFP appointed 66 SACMOs. It took the directorate four years to complete the recruitment process. Document shows, DGFP published the recruitment advertisement on May 4, 2015.

Still 469 posts of SACMO out of

2,500 posts are vacant. Recruitment of another 113 SACMOs is underway, confirmed the DGFP office, according to the official.

"It's one of the major causes behind the hampering of family planning activities of the government as it is putting extra burden on the staffers," said Professor Mohammad Mainul Islam, chairman of population sciences department at Dhaka University.

Along with filling up the vacant posts and expediting recruitment process, the government should increase budget allocation and introduce incentives system to motivate field level staffs, he added.

According to a report titled "Bangladesh Voluntary National Review 2017", Bangladesh is the fifth most populous country in Asia and eighth most populous in the world.

The report also says the country's average fertility rate is 2.1 per woman while the contraceptive prevalence rate is 62.1 percent.