

# Probe role of madrasa

FROM PAGE 16

informed Enamul about Siraj's conduct, the court said during a writ petition hearing.

The court also issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why Enamul's inaction should not be declared illegal.

The HC also said people's faith and trust in teachers and institutions would be hampered due to such incidents.

The court ordered the education and public administration ministries to submit a report before it by August 20, after the enquiry, and directed the ministries to take action against Enamul if found guilty.

The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the order and rule after hearing a writ petition recently filed by Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond.

In the petition, Eunus said that the Sonagazi madrasa governing body chairman reportedly did not take any action against Siraj ud Daula even after Nusrat and her mother went to Enamul's office and requested him to do so, but Enamul refused and even he asked them to keep the incident a secret.

During the writ hearing, Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Basher told the court that the government would take necessary steps to bring the persons responsible for harassing students to book.

On April 6, a group of people poured kerosene on Nusrat and set her afire at the Feni madrasa for refusing to withdraw a sexual harassment case against the principal.

The 18-year-old girl lost her battle for life on April 10 -- an incident that

sparked outrage all over the country.

Three months before Nusrat's incident, Siraj ud Daula was accused of sexually harassing another student, said Maulana Mohammad Hossain, acting principal of Sonagazi Islamia Senior Fazil Madrasa.

The student's father had complained to three teachers of the madrasa about the incident.

Siraj later served show-cause letters to those teachers and announced that they were conspiring against him.

Eight months before this incident, another student also complained to a teacher about being sexually harassed by Siraj.

Siraj humiliated that teacher in response.

Other female students had also complained to a teacher about Siraj's misconduct against them. The teacher, however, was too scared to ask the principal about the complaints.

Maulana Mohammad Hossain made these allegations yesterday before Mamunur Rashid, a judge of Feni's Women and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal.

In his testimony, Mohammad further said the principal's room used to be on the ground floor of the western side of the building. Around five years ago, Siraj shifted his office room to the first floor of the cyclone shelter.

"He shifted his room there to molest students."

Another councillor of Sonagazi municipality Mohammad Yasin and Nurul Karim, driver of Sonagazi Upazila Health Complex, who took her to the Feni Sadar Hospital from the health complex, gave their testimonies before the tribunal yesterday.



Demonstrators from the Extinction Rebellion climate activist group gather outside of The Royal Courts of Justice on The Strand in central London yesterday. Extinction Rebellion wants non-violent civil disobedience to force governments to cut carbon emissions and avert a climate crisis it says will bring starvation and social collapse.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Pro-China mayor to face Tsai in Taiwan presidential clash

AFP, Taipei

A populist mayor who favours closer ties with Beijing was named yesterday as presidential candidate for Taiwan's main opposition party as it looks to unseat President Tsai Ing-wen in upcoming elections.

Han Kuo-yu won the primary for the Kuomintang (KMT), comfortably seeing off a challenge from Taiwan's richest man, billionaire Foxconn founder Terry Gou.

His victory sets up an unpredictable clash as Taiwan goes to the polls in January in a contest that will be dominated by relations with China.

Han, 62, has enjoyed a stunning rise in the last two years, journeying from relative obscurity to become this party's presidential candidate in a phenomenon that has been dubbed the "Han tide".

Some have likened him to US President Donald Trump and other populist leaders who hail from outside establishment circles and command a fervent voter base buoyed by lofty promises of resurrecting their fortunes.

# PNG to boost security after mass killing escalates tribal war

AFP, Sydney

Authorities in Papua New Guinea have boosted security to prevent a further escalation of tribal violence, officials said yesterday, after at least 24 people were killed in a troubled upland region earlier this month.

The country's highland clans have fought each other for centuries, but last week's discovery of bodies, mostly belonging to women and children, marked a deadly departure from a cycle of killing in which the vulnerable are usually off limits.

PNG's new police minister Bryan Kramer said immediate intervention was needed in Hela province -- a rugged region in the west of the

country -- to prevent the latest bout of violence becoming the new norm.

"Last week's merciless killings has changed everything," Kramer said in a Facebook post on his return from the affected region.

Kramer said the decades-old conflict between two tribes had spiralled following the murder of a tribesman in June, and led to the massacre of women and children which he described as "the worst pay back killing in our country's history".

A defence force platoon and a mobile police squad had been stationed at a local primary school "to provide around the clock security, to prevent any further escalation of

violence", he added.

Authorities would engage "drone technology and satellite surveillance" to track down perpetrators who are believed to have fled the area, Kramer said.

The incident has shocked both the nation and the recently appointed Prime Minister, James Marape, whose constituency includes the district where the killings occurred.

Marape has vowed to find the killers, and noted that the death penalty was "already a law".

Alili Urr, who lost his wife, a child and nine other family members in the killings told local media he was not seeking revenge but wanted authorities to take action.

# Resurrected plane

FROM PAGE 16

reborn not from smoldering ashes but from frigid ice.

The rough and versatile C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft (or to be more exact, its ski-fitted version, the Lockheed LC-130) is used by the US Antarctic Program to ferry supplies to its string of bases across Antarctica, an unforgiving continent permanently buried by a sheet of ice averaging at least one mile thick.

On December 4, 1971 one such airplane, call sign Juliet Delta 321, left on what was to be an unexpectedly long sortie.

On that fateful day, after resupplying a scientific expedition at an isolated spot in East Antarctica, Juliet Delta 321 experienced a malfunction in the rockets used to assist in take-off and was forced to crash-land on the ice, which caused the collapse of the main landing gear.

No injuries were reported, but a

salvage operation was deemed too complex and costly and the aircraft was abandoned at the spot.

In the late 1970s, however, two other US LC-130 planes were recovered after going through similar incidents in Antarctica. With these precedents on the table, the recovery of Juliet Delta 321 didn't seem like such a crazy option.

It wasn't until 1986, though, 15 years after the accident, that plans were drawn for the salvage of the aircraft. The recovery work was to be conducted over the Austral summer seasons of 1986/87 and 1987/88.

The first stage of the recovery operation involved a six-man team from the US Antarctic Program's logistics support contractor traveling to a location named D59, near the French station Dumont D'Urville and about 140 miles from the crash site.

# Flood

FROM PAGE 16

in Sylhet region, 392 in Kurigram, 300 in Bandarban, 65 in Mymensingh's Dhobaura, 37 in Sherpur, 64 in Lalmonirhat, 21 in Nilphamari, 65 in Bogura, and 115 in Gaibandha.

"Our home has been flooded. We have evacuated for survival. How will I send my son to school?" asked Sirajul Islam, whose son goes to Bandarban Town Primary School.

Head teacher of the school Sohel Azad said, "Around 100 families took shelter in our school. Classes are out of question."

However, the district's overall flood situation started improving yesterday.

In Kurigram, 76 schools are being used as flood shelters.

"I haven't been to school in a week. My teachers and parents asked me not to go to school until the flood goes away," said Baizid Alam, a fourth grader of Pachgachhi Government Primary School in the town.

In Sylhet division, an additional 37 schools may have to shut down in a day or two, said Jahangir Ahmed, deputy director at the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education in Sylhet.

In Lalmonirhat, Head Teacher Abdus Salam of Arazi Chongadar Karim Uddin Govt Primary School said teachers were coming to schools on boats while the classes have been suspended three days ago.

In Nilphamari, 12 schools were severely damaged by flood in Dimla and Kishoreganj upazilas.

In Gaibandha, father of a 5th grader, Solaiman Ali said, "We are busy struggling to survive. We will think about education later."

Education officials in different districts said they would try to compensate for the missed classes by taking extra ones after the flood.

Our Mymensingh, Sherpur, Bandarban, Kurigram, Moulvibazar, Sylhet, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Bogura, Gaibandha, Pabna and Chattogram correspondents contributed to the report.

# 'Xenophobic'

FROM PAGE 16

and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came. Then come back and show us how it is done," Trump wrote.

Outgoing British Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday condemned Trump's tweets.

"Her view is that the language which was used to refer to the women was completely unacceptable," May's spokesman told reporters.

WHAT RACISM LOOKS LIKE

Trump did not identify the targets of

his comments by name.

But in a tweet later in the day, he said they "hate Israel with a true and unbridled passion," indicating he may have been referring to Omar and Taib, who have recently been embroiled in controversies related to the Jewish state.

Taib, who was born in Detroit, is the first American of Palestinian descent elected to Congress, while Omar, who fled war-torn Somalia as a child and came to the United States as a refugee, is the first black Muslim woman in Congress.

Ocasio-Cortez, who was born

in New York, is of Puerto Rican ancestry, and Pressley, who was born in Cincinnati, is the first African American elected to Congress from Massachusetts.

The four hit back at Trump on his favoured social media site.

"I am fighting corruption in OUR country. I do it every day when I hold your admin accountable as a US Congresswoman," Taib tweeted.

"You are stoking white nationalism bc you are angry that people like us are serving in Congress and fighting against your hate-filled agenda," Omar wrote on Twitter.

# Industrial sprawl

FROM PAGE 2

The PM said she has already given instructions to increase accommodation facilities for government officials and employees to 40 percent in Dhaka, which was only 8 percent in 2014.

"We'll build 6,350 flats under 16 projects of the housing and public works ministry. Allocations have been made for building 1,674 more flats under 13 other projects."

Hasina mentioned that construction of 398 flats in 20 abandoned houses in the capital's Gulshan, Dhanmondi and Mohammadpur areas and 1,824 flats and 64 dormitories in 51 abandoned

houses in Chattogram is going on. Besides, initiatives have been taken to build 317 flats by acquiring 15 more abandoned houses.

She said her government has already taken initiatives to build 2,816 dormitories in 64 districts to increase the housing facilities for public servants.

Hasina later visited one of the three buildings built for grade-I officials on Eskaton Garden Road in the city.

A video documentary on the seven projects was also screened at the function.

The housing and public works ministry and Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha constructed the buildings in different parts of the city.

# Delay due to pressure

FROM PAGE 16

the country after two college students were killed by a bus on Airport Road in the capital on July 29.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader had earlier said discipline on roads would be restored once the law came into force.

However, the government, as per requirement of the law, is yet to publish a gazette notice determining when the law will come into effect.

The government said preparing rules for the act is a must for execution of some of its sections. So, it will be made effective after the enactment of the rules.

After failing to meet four deadlines, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) submitted a draft rule for the act in May.

Later, the Road Transport and Highways Division formed a 10-member committee, led by its Additional Secretary Abdul Malek, to scrutinise the rule.

The committee is scheduled to hold its second meeting tomorrow.

Several officials of the road transport ministry and the BRTA blamed pressure from the transport leaders for the delay in making the law effective.

They said the government does not want to make the transport organisations angry. Instead, it wants to solve the problem by meeting some demands of the platforms, mainly led by ruling Awami League leaders.

Quader, also the AL general secretary, on several occasions said the government was looking into whether the transport workers' demands could be met by formulating rules.

'PRESSURE FROM TRANSPORT LEADERS'

After the passage of the act, Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation

observed a two-day strike on October 28-29 last year demanding changes to the law.

Their demands include revoking the Tk5 lakh fine for causing road accidents, making all accident related cases bailable, and reducing the mandatory educational qualification requirements from class-VIII to class-V for getting a driving licence.

AL lawmaker Shajahan Khan, also a former minister, is the executive president of the federation. Safety campaigners said the platforms previously "disobeyed the government's decisions and held the people hostage" to realise their demands.

Bangladesh Goods Transport Owners Workers United Council, a forum of transport owners and workers carrying goods, also observed a three-day strike in Dhaka to press home similar demands.

Against this backdrop, the three-minister committee was formed. The committee, comprising law, home and railway ministers, held its first meeting yesterday, with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan in the chair.

"We had several meetings with the stakeholders and will hold another meeting with the leaders of transport owners and workers for further discussions," said Nurul Islam Sujan.

The tentative date for the meeting is August 29, he added.

Osman Ali, general secretary of the Workers Federation, told The Daily Star yesterday that during their informal meeting with the committee, they mainly pressed for two changes to the act.

According to the new law, a driver may face a maximum five-year imprisonment or a fine of Tk5 lakh or both for causing death or injury to

a person by reckless driving and the offense is non-bailable.

A driver would face three-year jail for the same offence as per the Motor Vehicles Ordinance-1983, which is still in force.

Osman said they have no objection to the provision for punishment, but they demanded the committee make the offence bailable.

The law also stipulates that a driver or conductor or associates will face three-year jail or a fine of Tk3 lakh or both for causing damage to a person's life or properties by reckless driving or speeding or overloading. The offence is also non-bailable.

Osman said they demanded reducing the punishment of drivers, conductors and owners for overloading and making the offence bailable.

He said transport agencies, who were mainly responsible for overloading, should be brought to book.

"They [committee members] have assured us of checking whether the offence can be made bailable. They also had a similar response about our other demands."

Asked whether the committee would recommend relaxing the law, Railway Minister Sujan, also a Supreme Court lawyer, said, "There are some inconsistencies and repetitions in the act [They [transport leaders] also raised objections on some issues. We will look into it."

Osman, however, denied that they were delaying making the law effective.

"Parliament enacted the law in the face of a student movement without proper scrutiny and that's why its implementation is taking time," he claimed.

# Govt probe

FROM PAGE 16

It also issued a rule asking the government to explain within four weeks as to why it failed to ensure transparency in purchasing the items.

The court sought to know the steps taken against the officials involved in alleged irregularities.

The bench of Justice Tariq ul Hakim and Justice Md Shohrowardi gave the order and rule following the writ petition.

During a hearing on May 20, Suman told the HC that the irregularities in purchasing the furniture and other household items should be enquired by an independent judicial committee, as the committees formed by the housing and public works ministry might be biased.

The officials against whom the

# 'Small window' to save Iran

FROM PAGE 16

in the principle of reciprocity of rights and duties" in the nuclear deal, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

NO 'LESS FOR LESS'

Europe hopes to use a special trading mechanism called INSTEX to enable businesses to deal with Iran without using the US dollar or financial system, thereby avoiding Washington's sanctions.

But the system is complicated, no transactions have been finalised yet and it can for now only be used for humanitarian goods -- food and pharmaceuticals, for example -- and not Iran's crucial oil sector.

Iran accuses Europe of not doing enough, but the sweeping nature of the US measures has scared many major European businesses out of Iran despite Brussels' insistence that American sanctions do not apply in Europe.

allegations have been raised are part of the housing ministry, he argued, adding that the officials have failed to keep the faith in them through the purchase of the items.

According to reports in the media as well as on social media, the purchase prices of various items to furnish the project's 966 flats for the Russian engineers and others were abnormally higher than the market prices.

The reports claimed that each pillow was bought for Tk 5,957, and the cost of carrying it to a flat was Tk 760. An electric stove cost Tk 7,747 and the carrying cost from the ground floor to the top one cost Tk 6,650.

The reports also said the price of an electric iron was Tk 4,154 and the carrying cost Tk 2,945.

"Iran has taken bad decisions in response to the bad decision of the United States to pull out of the deal and re-impose sanctions, whose extraterritoriality strikes at the economic advantages the country got from the deal," French Foreign Minister Jacques-Yves Le Drian said as he arrived for talks in Brussels.

EU ministers insisted Iran must return to respecting its obligations under the deal in full, rejecting a suggestion by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani that both sides could reduce their commitments.

"This is a very, very serious situation. We must make it clear once again, in clear language, that there is only a chance if Iran commits itself unreservedly to what is contained in the treaty," Germany's junior foreign minister Michael Roth told reporters.

# Man held

FROM PAGE 16

away from disclosing the incident, but later she told everything to her husband, the OC said, adding that her husband suggested her to file the case.