

Probe against Laxmipur MP Shahid begins

67 held in Libya killing incident so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police has started investigation against Laxmipur lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul, who was arrested in Kuwait on charge of human trafficking.

Imtiaz Ahmed, deputy inspector general of CID, disclosed the development yesterday. He, however, did not elaborate further on the matter.

"We have taken steps as per procedure and started our investigation against Papul. We will disclose details with evidence. Have patience," said Imtiaz.

On June 6, the lawmaker was arrested by the Kuwait Criminal Investigation Department.

Imtiaz was speaking at a press briefing organised by CID to give updates on the Libya Human Trafficking case. Barrister Mahbubur Rahman, additional inspector general of police, also the chief of CID, addressed the briefing as chief guest.

Regarding the investigation, Barrister

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Standing atop a dome-shaped structure, these three workers go about their daily grind on a Sunday morning in Bijoy Sarani. Like them, thousands in the capital work in the construction sector without any safety measures and equipment, putting their lives at risk.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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CID expanding to 64 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is expanding its presence across the country, its chief said yesterday.

In order to bolster the law enforcing agency's activities; they have already taken steps to set up office in all 64 districts, said Additional Inspector General Mahbubur Rahman at a press conference at CID office yesterday.

Already, 45 Superintendent of Police (SP) and 19 Additional SP level officers have been appointed as chiefs at district-level offices, who will look into operational and administrative activities, he added.

The district head will also supervise investigation into cases that CID is tasked with, he said.

Previously, CID had offices only at divisional headquarters and some other major districts.

Tasked by courts, Police Headquarters and the home ministry, CID is currently investigating cases filed for 22 types of crimes, such as money laundering, human trafficking, organised crime and sensational murders.

"Currently, the specialised police unit is investigating some 5,811 cases across the country. Of the cases, 23 to 24 percent are murder cases," said the CID chief.

He also said CID has submitted charge sheets of around 82 percent of its investigated cases. However, the conviction rate of those is 24 percent only.

"We have taken steps to find out loopholes to increase the conviction rate. We have already appointed law-background professionals to assess the reasons behind low rate of conviction," he said.

After analysing the cases, court opinions on reasons of not convicting accused, the group is set to submit a report to him in the next one month, said Mahbubur.

Regarding poor convocation rate, he said from the police perception, they are suspecting delay in completing investigation and delayed in trial procedure are some of the main reasons.

"We will from now on make investigation officers (IOs) accountable for the delay in investigation," he said.

The CID boss also said currently 60 to 70 percent of evidence of the cases are oral-based, while 30 to 40 percent are forensic. He further said they would take steps to ensure more forensic evidence of cases.

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Even rudimentary health checks prove difficult to avail

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Monirul Alam, a resident of Gendaria, has been suffering from high blood pressure for the last two years.

Last week, while grocery shopping at Dhupkhola kitchen market, suddenly he started feeling unwell. Immediately, he went to a nearby pharmacy to check his blood pressure (BP). But he was refused.

Desperate, Monir searched around 10 more dispensaries in the area, but he was turned down everywhere.

"This is how I always get my BP checked. But now everyone is rejecting out of fear of coronavirus," Monir said. This is a regular service offered by dispensaries, who do it for a Tk 10 fee.

Finally, a young pharmacy owner at Satish Sarkar Road of Gendaria agreed to check his BP. The BP was found to be oscillating between 80 and 60.

Confirmed of his condition, Monir consulted a doctor over phone and took the necessary steps to get the pressure back to normal.

The experience was too much for Monir. Within a couple of days, he went to Jatrabari and bought a BP checker. The checking process turned out to be surprisingly easy. Monir and his wife learned the operation from YouTube tutorials.

BP issues are a common ailment for many across the country, who are feeling the crunch during this pandemic, especially those with lower-incomes.

Pharmacy owners said their hands are tied. Alamgir Hossain, owner of a dispensary at Ibrahimpur, said, "It's not possible to provide the service maintaining social distancing. It's not like we want to refuse people who come to us, but we don't have a choice."

Meanwhile, with the growing demand of BP machines, the price of the medical gadget has seen an upsurge. A staff of Sayma Pharmacy at Mirpur-10, a store that sells BP checkers, said, "Sales have seen an increase."

Same goes for prices. The staffer said the price of a

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'Refusing Treatment' Investigate allegations raised against hospitals: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the health secretary to conduct an inquiry into the reported allegations against the hospitals concerned of refusing to provide treatment to the patients during coronavirus pandemic. The government has also been directed to fix the retail and refilling prices of oxygen cylinders in 10 working days.

The health secretary was ordered to submit the report to the HC by July 21.

During a virtual hearing on five writ petitions, the court asked Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) to take steps so that patients deprived of treatment can lodge complaints to the office concerned through email.

It asked authorities to take steps so that patients suffering from serious diseases like cancer and kidney problems are tested for Covid-19, test reports are provided within 36 to 48 hours and their treatments are ensured at the hospitals concerned.

'Shutting down jute mills tantamount to destroying sector'

Workers Party calls upon govt to keep the industry running

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shutting down state-owned jute mills in the name of modernisation is tantamount to destroying the jute sector, Workers Party of Bangladesh said yesterday.

The party leaders said this while attending a politburo meeting yesterday morning through video conference, chaired by party president Rashed Khan Menon.

They called upon the government to keep the state-owned jute mills open, said a press release.

They said the government is trying to cover up the corruption in jute sector by categorising jute mills as a loss-making corporation and imposing its responsibility on the workers.

It is a strategy of the government to put "one doth the scathe, another hath the scorn" which is just a follow-up to the previous BNP-Jamaat government's policy, they added. They said that the Prime Minister had formed the Jute Commission in 2010 for the revival of jute industry, which encouraged the discovery of the genome of jute.

"What happened now that led to the suicidal decision to close the jute mills and abolish the jute economy? If the jute mill is closed, darkness will engulf the life of millions of people involved in the sector," they added.

The meeting proposal states that action should be taken against the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC), the officials responsible for corruption in the purchase of jute, irregularities in supply during the season, untimely purchase of jute and failure to market the products. "The corrupt officials are ultimately liable for the collapse of the jute industry," the speakers said.

According to the government's calculations, the amount of loss in the jute industry in the last 44 years is Tk 10,500

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Colleges in a fix over promoting 11th graders

Authorities discussing possibility of learning gap

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Colleges following the national curriculum are divided over promoting 11th-grade students to the next grade, as debates on possibility of a learning gap are ongoing, amid closure of educational institutes.

Some college authorities started promoting their students without holding final exams, while others are thinking about holding exams online to facilitate promotion.

Many teachers say promoting students without proper assessment will create a learning gap. The other side, however, differed with them, saying the syllabus was already completed, no such issues should occur.

Rajuk Uttara Model College Principal Brigadier General Kazi Showkat Alam said they have decided to promote students based on their mid-term and class-test performances.

"We could not take final exams due to the pandemic," he said. "There is no question of learning gap, as we have completed the syllabus before school closure."

Notre Dame College authorities, in a notice published on Thursday, announced that all 11th-grade students have been promoted. A teacher there said they have promoted the students based on scores of their previous exams.

He referred to the college's principal, Father Hemanto Pius Rozario, to get an official response, but the principal's phone was found switched off after repeatedly trying to reach him yesterday.

Dhaka College Principal Prof Nehal Ahmed, said they had started 11th-grade final exams before closure.

"Now, we are looking for ways for complete the assessment. We have kept online education as an option. After everything is settled, we will promote the students," he said.

"In our country, students study the most just before and during exams. If you do not hold final exams and just promote them, there is chance of a learning gap," he said.

Dhaka Residential Model College Principal Brigadier General Kazi Shameem Farhad said they will arrange an evaluation test for promotion purposes.

"We will decide after considering results of earlier tests and the upcoming evaluation. Students lose interest in studying if you just promote them without exams. As a result, there can be a learning gap," he said.

Viqarunnisa Noon School and College Principal Prof Fougia said they will decide after discussing the matter at a governing body meeting next week.

Ideal School and College, Motijheel, Principal Shahan Ara Begum said they have already completed 11th-grade final exams before closure.

Dhaka Education Board Chairperson Prof Ziaul Haque said as final exams are internal assessments, college authorities can decide the best course of action.

"We're aware that some colleges are promoting students based on past assessment. All colleges can do that," he said.

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POLICE BRUTALITY ON STUDENT High Court orders judicial inquiry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to conduct a judicial inquiry into the allegations of police torture on college student Imran Hossain and taking "unethical benefits" from his father for releasing him from their custody. Imran Hossain, a second-year student of Kazi Nazrul Islam Degree College under Jashore Sadar upazila, was reportedly tortured by police on June 3 without any specific allegations. The torture left Imran with damaged kidneys, his family claims.

Yesterday, the HC said the probe into the allegations of torture will be carried out by a judicial officer not below the rank of a district and sessions judge.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan also asked the authorities concerned to submit the inquiry report to this court in 60 days. It came up with the directive during holding a virtual hearing on a writ petition filed seeking necessary order.

During the hearing, writ petitioner Barrister Humayun Kabir Pallob told the HC bench that the probe reports submitted by the civil surgeon and superintendent of police of Jashore were not fully correct as they, in the reports, said that Imran was "under the influence of drugs". He also said Imran Hossain was brutally tortured by the police although he is innocent.

Yesterday, Jashore Civil Surgeon Dr Sheikh Abu Shahin submitted documents of the treatment of Imran, saying that he is not doing well, Humayun Kabir Pallob told The Daily Star. Nothing was found in the dope test report of Imran, he added.

On June 28, Jashore SP Ashraf Hossain reported to the High Court that three police personnel had taken "unethical benefits" from Imran's father for releasing him.



A seller pushes his cart full of lotkon, an underrated delicacy of the season. He sells it for around Tk 100-150 per kg, and it's best to grab some before the season is over. This photo was taken at Dhaka's Sabujbagh area last week.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BTRC restrictions on Grameenphone remain in force

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission's restrictions on Grameenphone will remain in force as the High Court yesterday dropped a writ petition, filed challenging the BTRC decision from its hearing list.

According to the restrictions, GP will have to secure prior approval from the telecom regulator before rolling out any packages or offers. The mobile operator will also have to have all of its existing packages and offers validated by August 31. However, for new offers and packages, the directive will become effective on July 1.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim held the petition filed by the mobile operator "out of list" after virtually hearing it.

During the hearing, GP's lawyer Barrister Mahfuzur Rahman Khan told the bench that his client would not proceed with the petition as it is moving for a settlement over the issue with the BTRC.

BTRC lawyer Barrister Khandaker Reza-E Raqib told The Daily Star that the restrictions imposed by the BTRC on GP will remain effective following the HC order.

Grameenphone has recently filed the petition with the HC, challenging legality of BTRC decision. The petition was submitted on June 28, also seeking a stay on the restrictions imposed on June 21.

GP's lawyer Barrister Mahfuzur Rahman Khan earlier told The Daily Star that his client filed the petition as it did not violate any rule or law concerned.

Even the BTRC itself has not brought any allegation against GP of abusing its dominant position in the market, he said citing the petition.