

KHASHOGGI MURDER
Fiancee Hatice Cengiz,
rights group sue Saudi
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"Our doors remain open and will remain open until the last day possible. But it takes two to reach a deal."

EU'S BREXIT NEGOTIATOR MICHEL BARNIER

No final exams for class 6-9

NCTB preparing brief syllabus for over 1 crore students

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

More than one crore students of class 6-9 will be promoted to next classes this year without any annual examinations, the government announced yesterday.

"There will be no annual exams for them. There will be no results, no grading..." Education Minister Dipu Moni declared at a virtual press briefing, adding that the decision was made taking the current coronavirus situation into consideration.

Replying to a query, she also hinted that schools and madrasas might not reopen next month.

The announcement comes when students and guardians all across the country are in confusion about promotion to next classes as schools and madrasas have remained shut for more than seven months amid the pandemic. The government has already announced that the closure was extended until October 31.

Recently, the government said this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent exams were cancelled to stem Covid-19 transmission.

At the briefing, Dipu Moni said the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) had already prepared a brief syllabus for the class VI-IX students in schools and madrasas so that they could achieve the minimum learning outcome.

Assignments would be given to the pupils every week to identify their learning shortcomings. "The assessment method will help us understand the weaknesses of the students and address them. The assessment will not have any impact on their promotion to next classes," she said.

Students will be able to get and submit the assignments to their

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Pregnant woman raped, filmed

A case filed against 8 people in Noakhali, 11 days after the incident

STAR REPORT

A pregnant woman in Noakhali's Senbagh was raped by a man and filmed by his associates on October 9, just five days after the Begumganj rape.

The video of the incident has gone viral in social media.

Meanwhile, another housewife was raped at knifepoint in the same upazila early yesterday, and two minor girls were raped in Satkhira since Tuesday.

The Senbagh victim, who was driven away by her husband after the incident, filed a case with Senbagh Police Station on Tuesday night -- 11 days after the incident -- against eight young men in the area, along with five to six unknown people.

Police arrested three accused including Shuvo, 18, Raki, 17, and Hasan, 18. However, they could not arrest Parvez, 25, the mastermind, reports our Noakhali correspondent.

The victim's husband worked as a microbus driver under one Shimul. The husband had gone to Chattogram for a trip on October 9, leaving his wife home alone.

Shimul's brother Parvez came to know about the woman being home alone and went there at night with 10 to 12 young men along with him.

As Parvez raped the victims, his associates, including Raki, Shuvo and Hasan, filmed through the window.

They later tried to blackmail the housewife with the video and demanded that she pay them Tk 30,000.

As she could not, they sent the video to her husband, who kicked her

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Stop rape arbitration

HC orders law enforcers to take measures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed law enforcers to take necessary steps to stop the use of salish (arbitration) in adjudicating rape incidents in the country.

The salish, or village panchayat, has acted for many years as a traditional judicial mechanism, operating mostly in rural parts of Bangladesh.

The court also ordered the authorities concerned of the government to submit a report to it in three months on how many rape cases were sent to the tribunals for trial in the last five years.

The report must include the steps the authorities are taking to ensure completion of trial proceedings within

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Short-staffed BRTA failing to deliver

Road safety remains a far cry

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

To get a driving licence from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, an aspiring driver is supposed to pass three tests -- written, practical and viva.

There are 68 driving competency boards to take the tests.

But none of the BRTA offices across the country has permanent, dedicated structures to arrange the tests. Instead, to complete these procedures they have been hiring venues or using classrooms and playgrounds of educational institutions.

The scenario is the same for fitness tests of vehicles. Tens of thousands of vehicles have to take the annual fitness clearance but only a handful issue it.

Only 109 motor vehicle inspectors gave fitness clearances to 7.5 lakh vehicles in the last fiscal year. They gave the vital clearance mostly manually as BRTA has only one digital machine to carry out vehicle fitness tests.

Established in 1987, BRTA deals with a myriad of tasks -- from vehicle registrations, issuing and renewing of drivers' licences, to fitness of vehicles and route permits for commercial vehicles.

But the transport regulator has been facing a severe shortage of professional manpower and the requisite technology to issue driving licences and vehicle fitness clearances -- two vital factors for road safety.

Although it has given "refreshment training" to some 75,000 professional drivers in the last fiscal year, experts found the two-day

**NATIONAL
ROAD SAFETY
DAY**

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Of promises, of legislature

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Road transport and traffic management, over a period of time, has gone through major changes, but road safety remains one of the most serious social concerns in Bangladesh and emerges as a "man-made epidemic".

Every day, people are dying in road accidents in different parts of the country. The roads remain as chaotic as it was. Unlicensed drivers continue to drive public transport recklessly. Unfit vehicles continue to operate. Traffic rules are violated grossly and openly. Vehicles are parked almost everywhere. Pedestrians cross roads at their will.

And one of the reasons behind the anarchy on roads is the lack of a comprehensive legislation -- that meets international best practices and ensures any offensive crime receives most fines and punishments -- and its proper execution.

Following a rise in frequency of road accidents and persistent demands from road safety campaigners, the government years back moved to update the Motor Vehicle Ordinance-1983, which became irrelevant in terms of punishment for traffic-related offences.

The ordinance stipulates a jail term of seven years as the maximum punishment for causing death by reckless and negligent driving. However, the Ershad government reduced the term of imprisonment to three years by amending the relevant law following truckers' protests in 1985.

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**EMBEZZLING Tk 10,200Cr
HC orders PK Halder's arrest upon his return**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the law enforcement authorities to arrest Proshanta Kumar Halder, who fled the country after allegedly siphoning off around Tk 10,200 crore from some non-banking financial institutions, immediately after his return home.

Allowing Halder, known as PK Halder, to return home, the HC asked the inspector general of police and the immigration police to arrest him upon his arrival at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar also asked the law enforcers to produce him before the "competent court" for necessary order. Anti-Corruption Commission lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

The bench came up with the order following

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Cargo vessels anchored at Bangabazar ghat in Chattogram yesterday, the second day of an ongoing strike called by the crew members. Bangladesh Noujan Sramik Federation leaders said they will not return to work unless their demands for better benefits and work conditions are met. Businesses are fearing massive disruptions in the supply chain of essential goods.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

LIGHTER VESSEL STRIKE

Importers stare at huge losses

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, CTG

Businesses are counting massive losses as almost 22 lakh tonnes of goods have been waiting to be unloaded for two days at sea and river ports across the country.

Unless some 150,000 crew members get back to their vessels, there will be acute disruption in the supply chain of a wide range of goods.

Bangladesh Noujan Sramik Federation called for the strike from Tuesday saying they will not resume work unless their demands for food and sea allowances, appointment letters, identity cards and several other benefits are met.

Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) Chairman Rear Admiral SM Abul Kalam Azad has called for a meeting at 3:00pm today to discuss the issue with the leaders of the federation, Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association and other stakeholders.

As of yesterday, a total of 40 cargo vessels with 10 lakh tonnes of wheat, lentil, maize, raw sugar, soya bean, salt, stone, coal, cement clinkers and other goods were stuck at the outer anchorage of Chattogram port.

Twelve more such vessels loaded with cement clinkers, wheat, coal and stone remained idle at the Mongla port.

Around 2,200 lighter vessels are engaged in the task of cargo discharging at the Chattogram port and 1,500 of them are controlled by a private organisation named Water Transport Cell (WTC).

City Group, Meghna Group, Bashundhara Group, Abul Khair Group and others own around 500 such vessels while there are around 200 non-registered vessels.

A total of 874 lighter vessels loaded with 12 lakh tonnes of imported goods are now stranded at 38 different private

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