

Akbar's arrest a 'cross-border' effort: police

Involved help from Bangladeshis, Indians and 10 lakh rupees, officials say

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

With speculations and rumours running rife on social media as to who actually detained suspended sub-inspector Akbar Hossain Bhuiyan from near the border area, Sylhet district police have said it took a "cross-border operation" to arrest him.

On Monday morning, Akbar, the prime suspect in the killing of Rayhan Ahmed in police custody in Sylhet, was detained along Bangladesh-India border in Dona area of the district's Kanaighat upazila.

Sylhet district police officially said Akbar was arrested by them at the border, with the help of some "trusted friends".

However, several videos went viral on social media the same day where it appeared that Akbar was detained by the people of the Khasi community in India's Meghalaya before he was handed over to a Bangladeshi citizen in Kanaighat.

Law enforcers were criticised for their claims.

After the arrest, Mohammad Farid Uddin, superintendent of police in Sylhet, without specifying much said Akbar was detained under direct supervision of police and some trusted friends helped them catch him.

However, while talking to this correspondent, many officials of the Sylhet district police said it was a joint operation of the law enforcers and locals from both the countries that eventually made the arrest possible.

HOW AKBAR WAS ARRESTED

A day after Rayhan's death, Akbar fled from Bandarabazar police outpost and two days later, he crossed the Bangladesh-India border in Bholaganj

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Workers were seen chopping down a huge tree at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. They said that officials plan on building a public toilet at the location, so the tree had to be felled.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

By-polls to Dhaka-18 and Sirajganj-1 today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka-18 and Sirajganj-1 constituencies are going to by-polls today.

Election Commission (EC) sources said necessary measures to follow health guidelines have been taken during the by-elections amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Electronic Voting Machines will be used in both the by-polls, which will be held from 8am to 4pm without any break.

Dhaka-18 fell vacant following the death of Awami League lawmaker Sahara Khatun and Sirajganj 1 fell vacant following the death of AL MP Mohammad Nasim.

Habib Hasan of Awami League, SM Jahangir Hossain of BNP, Mohammad Nasir Uddin Sarkar of Jatiya Party, Mohammad Omar Faruque of Bangladesh Congress, Kazi Mohammad Shahidullah of Gonofront and Mohammad Mahibullah Bahar of PDP are participating Dhaka-18 by polls.

There are 5.77 lakh voters in the area. The total number of polling stations is 217 and the number of polling booths is 1,353.

AL candidate Tanvir Shakil Joy and BNP-nominated Selim Reza are contesting in Sirajganj-1 by polls. The total number of voters in this constituency is 345,603. There are 168 voting centers in this constituency.

On September 28, the EC announced the by-election schedules for the two parliamentary constituencies.

Most students don't watch TV lessons: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ninety-four percent of students are aware about TV education being broadcast during the pandemic, but 89 percent of them do not watch the lessons, reveals a study.

The study of Bangladesh Education Reporters Forum was unveiled yesterday.

About 65 percent of secondary students of cities said online education increased their educational expenditures, and it is putting additional financial burden on parents.

Of them, 54 percent said expenditures increased by Tk 501-1,000 per month, 10 percent said it increased by up to Tk 500. Only one percent said they had to spend additional Tk 1,000-1,500, said Mustafa Mollick, president of the forum, while presenting the study.

Many educational institutions have introduced online classes to continue academic activities amid the pandemic. They took the measures as physical locations of all the institutes remain closed since March 17 and will not reopen till November 14, as per the latest government directive.

The forum carried out the study on 1,126 secondary and higher secondary students of Dhaka, Chattogram, Barishal, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet

cities.

Expenditures increased as they need to buy internet packages and routers, and other equipment for attending online classes, forum leaders said.

The study also found that 97 percent of students reported that their family income has reduced, while 63 percent of students are taking part in online education.

The government had started television education through Sangsad TV, so secondary and primary students can make up for losses due to school closure.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education Director General Prof Syed Md Golam Faruk, at the programme, said students of cities nowadays prefer attending online classes over taking lessons via TV.

Although physical classes have remained halted for over seven months, schools and colleges continued collecting tuition fees; 93 percent of students said their educational institutes realised full tuition fees.

Campaign for Popular Education Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury said as parents are financially struggling, the government should provide some incentives for the education sector.

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Jewel Aich in ICU with Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned

magician

Jewel Aich,

who recently

contracted

Covid-19, is

undergoing

treatment at

the intensive

care unit of

Combined Military

Hospital in the

capital.

His wife Bipasha

Aich told The

Daily Star that

she and their

daughter Keyya

Aich recently

recovered from

coronavirus.

As Jewel Aich's

fever persisted,

he underwent

tests that was

tested positive.

His lungs were

also infected,

she said.

On Monday, he

was taken to a

hospital, and

was later

admitted to

CMH on

Tuesday

afternoon.

Aich, a freedom

fighter, has

also been

suffering from

diabetes and

high blood

pressure for

long.



Country's youth are full of ideas

They must be encouraged to start enterprises, speakers say, urging govt to create capital fund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A capital fund must be created by the government to encourage young people to start enterprises, said speakers at a webinar organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation and Environment and Social Development Organization yesterday.

"Every year, 22.5 lakh youths enter the job market but the government can only employ 1.5 lakh people," said Md Anwarul Islam Sarkar, additional secretary (youth) of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

This leaves a huge population without employment security, he told the webinar titled "Youth in Active Citizenship Role".

The government cannot provide all youths with jobs, but the youth can be encouraged to begin enterprises, pointed out Syed Manzur Elahi, chairperson of Apex Group and noted industrialist.

"A fund can be created by the government to provide capital to the youth. The biggest barrier for young people entering business is the lack of capital. This fund can be done in partnership with the private sector," he added.

The youth should be encouraged not to rush to cities but focus on building opportunities where they live, Manzur Elahi asserted.

Elahi also said the sheer number of online businesses that have started up during the pandemic is proof that the youth are full of ideas.

"Young people should not just have things done to them, but also have the opportunity to do things on their own behalf," said British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson. He also reflected on the fact that the pandemic presented extraordinary challenges for the youth.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal stated that without intervention, the youth run the risk of going wayward. He warned the youth against getting involved with drugs.

"Some 245 youths from urban and peri-urban areas of Dhaka and Chattogram were surveyed and it was found that for a vast majority, their critical thinking skills were what would be a 'D' grade in Dhaka University," said Zahid ul Arefin Choudhury, associate professor of political science at University of Dhaka.

The number of youth with less-than-optimum critical thinking skills was over 150 out of 245, the academic added.

Shomy Chowdhury, a youth activist also spoke, while Md Shahid Uz Zaman, executive director of Environment and Social Development Organization, moderated the event.

The event was funded by UK Aid.

REPRESENTING OC PRADEEP Rana Dasgupta's resignation as ICT prosecutor demanded

He says he's doing nothing illegal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Organising secretary of Cox's Bazar District Awami League Naznin Sarwar Kaberi yesterday demanded resignation of advocate Rana Dasgupta from his prosecutor post of International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), over disrespecting the constitutional secularism through representing former Teknaf Police Station Officer-in-Charge Pradeep Kumar Das in court.

Kaberi also said the veteran lawyer's legal move -- for the prime accused in Maj Sinha Rashed murder case -- has been instigating communalism.

She made the demand from a press conference at a restaurant in port city's Cheragi Pahar area.

While reading out a written statement, the AL leader said, "According to the Legal Remembrancer's manual, there are two kind of law officials -- full-time salary-paid, and contractual. Rana Dasgupta is a salary-paid law official who is equivalent to a state minister rank. As per the state's warrant of precedency, his post is an Attorney General Category post. He cannot stand for a known criminal like Pradeep. If he wants, he should quit from his constitutional post."

Replying to a query, Kaberi said "Rana Dasgupta is a renowned lawyer and also a pro-liberation person. But he has intentionally stood for Pradeep as a lawyer, demeaning the secular spirit of constitution."

"He has committed a seditious act through fighting for a murderer. He should seek apology for his act," she added.

Thought there is no prior allegation against Pradeep over rape, the AL leader at the press conference claimed that Pradeep allegedly raped a number of women when he went for drives to arrest people in Teknaf.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rana Dasgupta said, "Prosecutor post of ICT is not a constitutional post and I am not paid salary, but an honorarium."

"I am neither the Attorney General nor the Additional Attorney General. The prosecutor post is created in the rank of additional attorney general's post," said the lawyer.

"Yes I am given police protocol by the government, but it is not given for my post but for my security, as ICT is a sensitive tribunal," he added.

The veteran lawyer said, "Pradeep is an accused in a criminal case. What is the relation between this case and spirit of secularism?"

"I think there is a conspiracy by a vested quarter who are using the AL leader. Neither do I care about any conspiracy, nor their baseless talks, as I am legally right on my track," said Dasgupta, who is also general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad.



After the pandemic swept the nation, Md Badshah of Kurigram, like many others, saw his income disappear. This forced him to leave his family and travel all the way to the capital to earn a living by giving rickshaw rides. In between trips, he finds the time to park his rickshaw and dial home, checking up on his wife and children. This photo was taken recently from the capital's Central Shaheed Minar area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Juvenile pneumonia ignored due to Covid-19 pandemic: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With no necessary tools, including oxygen support, in most hospitals, the issue of childhood pneumonia -- which causes more than 24,000 preventable deaths of children under five in the country annually -- is getting little importance during the pandemic, experts said yesterday.

To prevent premature deaths, there is need for multi-sectoral efforts to strengthen the country's health system and invest in low-cost local solutions, they said in an evidence sharing session with Health Reporters Forum (HRF), held at icddr,b in Dhaka, marking World Pneumonia Day.

It was jointly organised by Research for Decision Makers Activity of icddr,b and Data for Impact, with support from United States Agency for International Development.

Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman, an associate scientist at icddr,b, discussed the pneumonia situation globally and in Bangladesh. Referring to Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) 2017, he said, "Only

five percent of government health facilities in Bangladesh are prepared to properly treat pneumonia."

Besides, not even half of the health facilities had oxygen concentrator, while other oxygen sources were not available in one-third of the facilities under the study.

BDHS also found that only one-third of district hospitals had basic tools to measure oxygen saturation.

Referring to Bangladesh Health Facility Survey 2017, he said more than half of the children under five who die from pneumonia were not brought to hospital for treatment.

"When a hospital has lack of tools to treat pneumonia, it is normal for parents to be discouraged to bring their child for treatment. Intervention is needed to ensure availability of tools in hospitals," Dr Ehsanur said.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), any healthcare setting needs to ensure 10 items -- including guidelines, trained staff and certain equipment and medicines -- for providing child curative care.

Prof Ruhul Amin, pulmonologist at

the paediatrics department of Dhaka Shishu Hospital, said 18 percent of children under five die due to pneumonia.

To prevent such deaths, he stressed on ensuring nutrition of children by exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding; looking into environmental factors such as pollution; and timely treatment of children with respiratory distress.

Prof Samir Kumar Saha, executive director of Child Health Research Foundation, said, "We do not know the reason behind 50 percent of pneumonia cases. It is important to know this if we want to eliminate it, and we need combined efforts for this."

Dr Md Jobayer Chisti, senior scientist at icddr,b, stressed on having pulse oximetry devices in hospitals and investing on low-cost local innovations.

"The low-cost bubble CAP machine invented by icddr,b can help reduce such deaths by 75 percent. We are now piloting the device in two district hospitals in Kurigram and Narsingdi to know its feasibility," he informed.

We Deeply Mourn

Paramount Family expresses deep grief and sorrow over the demise of a recognized and leading entrepreneur

Md. Ali Azim Khan
MD of Shonest Group

A pioneer of Garments and allied industries in Bangladesh for decades. He was a valued mentor who always imparted innovative ideas. We warmly remember his enthusiastic and skillful advises towards Paramount Group.

A great loss indeed for all of us. We wish to extend our deepest sympathy to his family for this irreparable loss.



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