

HIGHEST SELLING 15 years

SHAH CEMENT



With only gamchhas wrapped around their heads, workers polishing brass items at a small workshop in the capital's Jatrabari. Safety gear to protect workers from health hazards or accidents are rarely provided by the workshop authorities. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ACTOR SHIMU KILLING Husband confesses, placed on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Slain actor Raima Islam Shimu's husband dumped her body in Keraniganj near midnight on Sunday and then went straight to Kalabagan Police Station in the capital to report that his wife had gone missing.

Khandaker Shakhawat Alim Nobel and his friend Farhad were each placed on a three day remand by a Dhaka court yesterday after Nobel admitted to police that he strangled his wife to death on Saturday night in their flat on Green Road, Shahabuddin Kabir, additional superintendent of police (Keraniganj), told The Daily Star.

Their 15-year-old daughter and seven-year-old son were sleeping in the next room during the murder.

Nobel then contacted Farhad and the duo planned to dump the body at a quiet place, Kabir said.

On Sunday morning, Nobel and Farhad sewed two sacks together and put Shimu's body in it. They then drove around Mirpur, Rupnagar and Ashulia areas with the body in the trunk of Nobel's car, looking for a place to dump the body.

They returned home with the body in the evening and dumped it in a bush near Alipur Bridge in Keraniganj near midnight. Nobel then went to Kalabagan Police Station to report that his wife had been missing.

By Monday noon, Keraniganj police recovered Shimu's body and ascertained her identity using her fingerprint.

Maruf Hossain Sorder, superintendent of police in Dhaka, at a briefing at his office yesterday said Nobel admitted that he and Shimu had long-standing



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FOR TRANSPORT WORKERS Special vaccine drive in capital today

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

The government is going to launch a special Covid-19 vaccination drive in the capital today for road transport workers, many of whom are still unvaccinated.

The drive will start from Mohakhali Bus Terminal and then be gradually expanded to Sayedabad, Gabtoli and Phulbaria terminals, officials said.

Civil surgeons across the country have also been directed to arrange similar drives at district level in consultation with local transport associations, they said.

The Cabinet Division in a circular on January 10 directed that only vaccinated transport workers would be allowed to operate vehicles and that all public transport would have to operate at half capacity to curb Covid transmission.

However, the number of vaccinated transport workers is low, say people involved in the sector.

"We are going to start a special drive to bring all transport

workers under vaccination," Dr Md Shamsul Haque, member secretary of Covid-19 vaccine management committee of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), told The Daily Star last night.

On January 12, road transport leaders at a meeting with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) demanded that the government arrange a crash programme to bring all workers under vaccination.

They also demanded that the government allow them to run at full capacity.

On the following day, BRTA sent both proposals to the Road Transport and Bridges Ministry. On Sunday, the ministry informed the transport associations in writing that they would be allowed to carry passengers at full capacity.

SPECIAL VACCINATION DRIVE

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said 100 transport workers from Mohakhali Bus Terminal have already been registered.

"The special drive will start tomorrow [today] with them," he

told The Daily Star last night.

He said transport associations at three other terminals in the city were also asked to start registration of unvaccinated workers.

"The programme will be carried out at those terminals gradually and continued until all of them get the vaccine," he said.

Shahidullah Sadhu, general secretary of Mohakhali Bus Terminal Workers' Union, said they have 6,500 members.

Besides, there are several thousand workers at the terminals and many of them already received the vaccine, he said.

"We are asking people through loudspeakers to get registered for vaccination. Many of them already got registered," he told The Daily Star last night.

The Dhaka civil surgeon's office had assured that it would be able to supply vaccines for as many transport workers listed for inoculation, BRTA sources said.

Asked about other parts of the country, Dr Shamsul Haque said they have already directed civil

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Resist any syndicate

Group of recruiting agencies writes to PM over labour recruitment to Malaysia

PORIMOL PALMA

A group of recruitment agencies urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to prevent the formation of any syndicate for labour recruitment in Malaysia.

Syndication will lead to a reappearance of the large-scale money-laundering and human trafficking seen in 2016-18, said the Shomnilo Somonnoy Front (SSF) of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies in a letter to the PM.

A syndicate would result in monopoly of recruitment and the victimisation of hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi youths, it added. The PMO received the letter on January 13.

Signed by SSF President Mohammad Farooq, Secretary General Mostafa Mahmud and Senior Vice-president Riaz Ul Islam, the letter was also copied to Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad, the chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on expatriates' welfare ministry and the secretary of the ministry.

It referred to the situation of 2016-18 when a syndicate of only 10 agencies, chosen by Malaysia against an offering of over 700 agents, monopolised recruitment.

If there is again a syndicate of agents for labour recruitment to Malaysia, our migrant workers will once more fall victim to labour exploitation. Also, corruption will spread, human trafficking will increase and the overall potential of the sector will be affected. Our dignity abroad will also be hampered."

Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on labour recruitment between Bangladesh and Malaysia on December 19, 2020, a total of 25 Bangladeshi recruiting agencies are now reportedly trying to monopolise recruitment.

The MoU brought an end to the Malaysian government's freeze on labour recruitment from Bangladesh since September 1, 2018, when it said malpractices in labour recruitment led to forced labour and debt bondage.

Minister Imran Ahmad denied the existence of any syndicate.

However, according to the recently leaked standard operating procedure under discussion between the two countries, Bangladeshi workers will be recruited by 25 main agencies which will be supported by 250 sub-agents.

In the letter, the SSF said the main barrier of labour recruitment to Malaysia is a vested quarter that is creating a syndicate to monopolise the sector.

During 2016-18, only 2.74 lakh workers were recruited from Bangladesh despite the Malaysian government declaring a requirement of 15 lakh over the next three years, the letter said.

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SUST PROTESTS Over 200 sued for attempted murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Hundreds of students continued to demonstrate on Sust campus for the fifth day yesterday while police filed a case accusing 200-300 unnamed students of attempted murder of law enforcers.

On Sunday evening, at least 30 students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology were injured as police charged them with truncheons, fired rubber bullets and threw sound grenades to free the vice-chancellor who was confined to his office by the demonstrators.

"The case is just a formality. It was not filed to intimidate or harass the general students protesting on campus. Since policemen were hurt and firearms were used, we had to file a case," Azbazar Ali Sheikh, deputy commissioner (north) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

The demonstrators announced last night that they would fast unto death

unless VC Farid Uddin Ahmed resigned from his post by 12:00pm today. They also declared that they would protest on campus all night demanding that police withdraw the case filed against them.

On Thursday, resident students of Begum Sirajunnessa Chowdhury Hall began protesting following allegations that Provost Zafraen Ahmed Liza misbehaved with a student who called him to report substandard foods at the dormitory.

The demand for the resignation of the VC came on Sunday. Prof Zafraen resigned from her post after the student-police clash on the same day.

The complaint filed yesterday by Sub-Inspector Abdul Hannan mentioned that the students threw bricks, crude bombs, and opened fire at police.

The police then fired 31 rubber bullets and threw 21 sound grenades to take control of the situation and rescue the VC from confinement.

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A group of students at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet protesting on campus for the fifth consecutive day yesterday. At one point, they surrounded the VC's residence and chanted slogans against him.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

BNP expels Taimur, his chief polls coordinator

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Just a day after he lost the election in Narayanganj City Corporation, Taimur Alam Khanda was expelled from BNP yesterday for violating the party's discipline.

Apart from Taimur, his chief election coordinator and also Narayanganj city unit BNP General Secretary ATM Kamal was ousted from the party.

The party's Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi told The Daily Star that their primary memberships were also cancelled.

Taimur was earlier relieved from post of adviser to party Chairperson Khaleda

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