



## Teacher ‘marries’ 10th grader son to fifth-grader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushita*

A primary school teacher in Chuadanga recently arranged the “marriage” of her 10th grader son with a fifth grader of her school.

The matter, kept secret for a few days, was found out by neighbours Sunday evening after the boy went to the girl’s house.

When local reporters went to the girl’s house yesterday morning, the boy ran away from them.

The reporters then went to the school and found the fifth grader wearing a burqa in her classroom. She still had the henna on her hands. She told reporters that the “marriage” took place over a week ago.

She said she had tried to stop the arrangement, but no one listened to her.

The teacher went to her house and the ceremony happened through a formal proposal in the presence of family members, she said.

The so-called marriage was mostly a performance of rituals as it had not been registered by the authorities.

Asked how she could do such a thing being a teacher, the woman didn’t say anything.

The ceremonies were conducted by a madrasa teacher. Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shamim Bhuiyan yesterday said there will be an investigation into the matter and action will be taken.

The Daily Star collated information from 41 upazilas of 13 districts between March 17, 2020, and September 12, 2021, and found about 11,000 school children were married off by their families.

A proper survey would have revealed a much greater number.



Police baton-charging members of the Left Democratic Alliance, who observed a half-day strike in many parts of the country yesterday to protest the price hike of daily essentials. The photo was taken in the morning at the capital’s Paltan intersection. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Media employees’ bill placed in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mass Media Employees (Services Conditions) Bill-2022 was placed in parliament yesterday, which stipulates the job facilities of journalists and employees of media outlets.

The wages and benefits of journalists, employees, and press workers, artists of broadcast, online, and print media outlets would be fixed under the proposed law.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud placed the bill, which was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry concerned for scrutiny.

The parliamentary watchdog has been asked to submit its report within 60 days.

As per the bill, journalists will be called “media professionals”, not “workers”.

It also stipulates that the wage board will be applicable for journalists and employees of all media outlets, including print and electronic.

According to the bill, the minimum working hours for media employees will be 48 hours a week. They will be entitled to casual leave of 15 days instead of 10 days. They will earn one day of earned leave for every 11 days of work.

It also says if any journalist or employee works beyond the stipulated time, he or she will be entitled to overtime.

Besides, the journalists and employees will enjoy 10-



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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of Left Democratic Alliance (LDA) clashed with police and also were attacked allegedly by ruling Awami League supporters in the capital and some other major cities during its nationwide half-day hartal yesterday.

However, the strike in protest of spiralling prices of daily commodities received a lukewarm response from the people as bus, launch and train services ran almost normal during the strike.

The alliance announced nationwide processions and rallies for today protesting the attacks and detentions of its activists by law enforcers.

Police used teargas and water cannons to break away hartal supporters at the capital’s Paltan. They also dispersed processions in the city’s Mirpur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, Barisal, Khulna and some other districts.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Shah Alam alleged that activists of the ruling AL and its associated bodies attacked pro-hartal protestors in Mirpur and Mohammadpur in capital and also on the Rajshahi University

### HALF-DAY HARTAL

## Pickets, police clash

campus.

LDA coordinator Saiful Haq told reporters that around 100 activists of the alliance were injured in “attacks by police and AL men”. He said police detained at least 30 hartal supporters from different places in the country.

Shah Alam said general people were facing hardship as the government failed to check the soaring prices of daily commodities.

The CPB chief said their demands include breaking the “business syndicate” that manipulates the market of daily essentials, issuing ration cards and opening fair price shops.

He told this newspaper that they would continue their movement to press home the demands.

Witnesses said LDA activists blocked the Paltan intersection in the capital around 6:30am yesterday, brought out processions in the area and sang patriotic songs sitting on the road.

The pickets allowed vehicles to cross the intersection around 11:00am. As the LDA convener was about to start his concluding speech at a protest rally around 11:30am, a scuffle broke out between

the demonstrators and law enforcers.

At one stage, police used batons and teargas to disperse the protesters. Law enforcers used water cannons against demonstrators after brick chips were thrown at them, triggering a clash.

Police intercepted a pro-hartal procession at Mirpur-10 around 6:30am and detained nine demonstrators, including Dhaka North City CPB President Sajedul Huq Rubel and its Kafrul unit President Ali Kawsar Mamun, said CPB President Shah Alam.

LDA leaders alleged that Jubo League and Samik League activists attacked a procession at Mirpur-10 while AL men attacked another one near the Mohammadpur bus stand in the morning.

Pickets blocked some important intersections in the capital, including Paltan and Shabagh, causing huge traffic jams in parts of the city.

Being caught in long tailbacks, many commuters got off buses and walked to their destinations.

In Khulna, police picked up several people from different areas of the city when they

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### PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

## JP, BNP MPs lambast govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Party and BNP MPs yesterday engaged in a debate over the rising prices of essentials and deterioration of law and order with their counterparts in the ruling party during the 17th session at parliament.

JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun said he regularly went to the market and that the prices of goods have gone up a lot.

“The government initiative is not working. I don’t think the government has any control on the market,” Chunnun said, speaking on a point of order.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, BNP Joint Secretary General Harunur Rashid and BNP MP Rumeen Farhana criticised the government for prices of essentials, deteriorating law and order situation, and widespread corruption.

In response, Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said the JP leader was making false claims in parliament, adding that the prices of soybean oil and onions have started to fall following government initiatives.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present at the session while Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury was in the chair.

Meonon demanded a parliamentary enquiry over the recent dismissal of Anti-Corruption Commission deputy assistant director Sharif Uddin.

Menon said Bangladesh is moving forward on the path of development. But corruption in our country has come to the fore as an extreme challenge.

### BUSINESS

## Stop relying on duty-free regime Says Dominican Republic envoy

Bangladesh should abandon the mentality of having a duty-free regime and focus on making products competitive as the country approaches graduation from the group of least-developed countries in 2026. “My first suggestion for you is: do not wait. Plan it now. It is not only for the LDC graduation but also for the latter stages,” says David Puig, ambassador of the Dominican Republic in Dhaka.

STORY ON B4



People jostle to enter the Nagar Shasthya Kendra (city health complex) in Khulna city to get their second dose of the Covid-19 vaccine under the “One Crore A Day” countrywide campaign. Many of the 1.34 lakh people who took the first dose in the campaign have all returned for the second, creating chaos at the centre yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## NIKO GRAFT CASE Ex-president of company jailed for 5yrs

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced Kashem Sharif, former president of Niko Resources (Bangladesh) Ltd, to five years’ rigorous imprisonment for taking bribe from Niko, a Canadian Oil and Gas Exploration Company.

Former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain, the prime accused, was relieved from the charges as he is dead.

Judge ASM Ruhul Imran of the Special Judge’s Court-2 of Dhaka handed down the sentence in absence of the convict and also fined him Tk 50,000, in default of which he will have to suffer six months more in jail.

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## A slap that overshadowed achievements

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ



The 94th Academy awards were historic, but not in the sense that you are probably thinking. It was only the third time that a female filmmaker had won the Best Director. Sian Heder’s “CODA” and her team took home Best Picture and Best Adapted Screenplay, on the same night that Ariana DeBose became the only homosexual woman of colour to win Best Supporting Actress. Jessica Chastain won Best Actress for her unforgettable performance in “The Eyes of Tammy Faye”.

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