

Ensure justice for teachers

17 noted citizens express concern over murder, humiliation of teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seventeen eminent citizens have expressed grave concern over murder and humiliation of teachers in Ashulia and Narail, and urged the government to strictly address the incidents. In a statement sent to the media yesterday, they said they have come to know from media sources that a teacher named Utpal Kumar Sarkar was beaten to death by a student in Ashulia, for protesting sexual harassment by the latter.

On June 18, there was another incident involving a teacher being assaulted in Narail over allegation of communal provocation.

“We are surprised and angered by how police took the college teacher to the police station without removing the garland of shoes around his neck. We have not witnessed such incident in our lifetime,” read the statement. In the statement, they urged the government to revamp all the institutions of the state, including education and administration, in light of the principles of Liberation War and ensure justice for teachers.

The signatories are: Hasan Imam, Anupam Sen, Selina Hossain, Ramendu Majumdar, Sarwar Ali, Ferdousi Majumdar, Abed Khan, Abdus Selim, Laila Hasan, Mofidul Haque, Shahriar Kabir, Muntassir Mamoon, Harun Habib, Shafi Ahmed, Shimul Yusuf, Sara Zaker and Nasiruddin Yousuff.

Meanwhile, National Human Rights Commission

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In absence of a foot-over bridge at Farmgate intersection, pedestrians squeeze through a concrete divider set in the middle of the road to go to the other side. This puts them at great risk since approaching cars often can't see them coming onto the road. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQUE

Press freedom enjoyed like never before

Info minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newspapers and electronic media are now enjoying unrestrained freedom under the current government, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud told parliament yesterday.

He said this in reply to a query from Jatiya Party MP Syed Abu Hossain from Dhaka-4, in a question-answer session chaired by Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

The minister in a scripted answer also said the free flow of information has been ensured to accelerate the country's national development.

He said the government has formulated National Media Policy 2014, enacted the Right to Information Act 2009, established Information Commission and formulated Online Media Policy 2017 to publish impartial news.

He mentioned that there are 46 televisions, 22 FM

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A longer wait

Buses from Gabtoli still not running through Padma Bridge; have to apply for route permit first

DIPAN NANDY

At least 600 buses leaving from Gabtoli terminal to the southwestern districts have not been able to use the Padma Bridge since its inception as their route permits have not been issued yet.

Buses will need route permits to transport passengers from Gabtoli through Paturia ghat. According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), no bus can cross Padma Bridge without a permit.

BRTA has already fixed 13 new routes for buses to pass through Padma Bridge, from Sayedabad terminal to the initial station. The buses will pass through Barishal, Patuakhali, Barguna, Jhalokati, Pirojpur, Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Gopalganj, Faridpur, Madaripur and Shariatpur districts.

As of yet, no bus operates through Padma Bridge from Sayedabad to Jessore, Meherpur, Kushtia, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah, Magura, Narail and Rajbari. Buses bound to these districts have to use Paturia ghat instead.

Currently, Sakura Paribahan operates the most buses

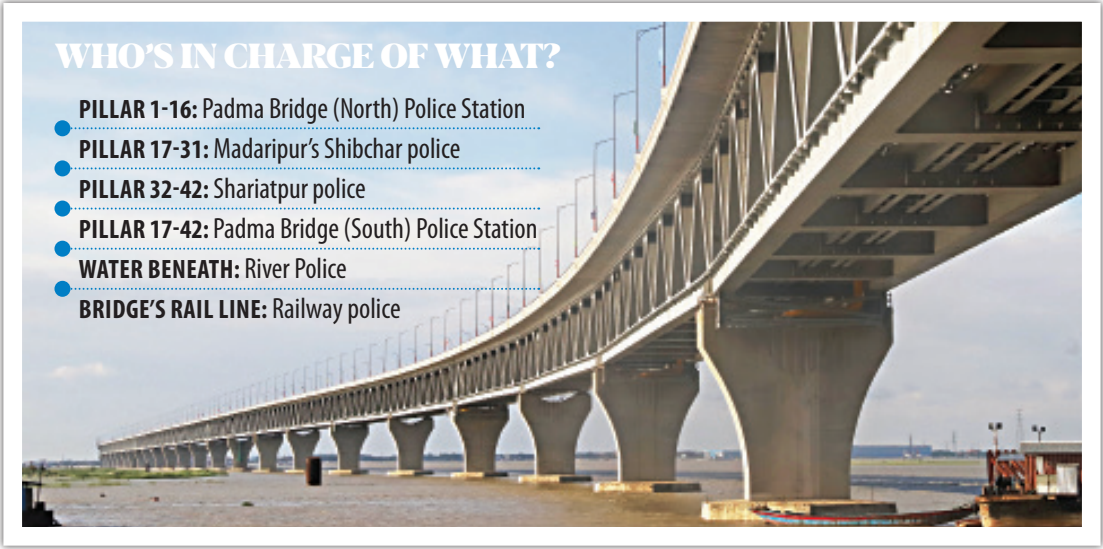
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PRAYER TIMING JUNE 29			Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
		Azan	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-54	8-17
		Jamaat	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-57	8-45
		SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

A riddle of RESPONSIBILITIES

11 law enforcement units in charge of different parts of Padma Bridge



WHO'S IN CHARGE OF WHAT?

- PILLAR 1-16: Padma Bridge (North) Police Station
- PILLAR 17-31: Madaripur's Shibchar police
- PILLAR 32-42: Shariatpur police
- PILLAR 17-42: Padma Bridge (South) Police Station
- WATER BENEATH: River Police
- BRIDGE'S RAIL LINE: Railway police

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

A day after Padma Bridge was opened, two young men died in a motorcycle accident on the bridge on Sunday.

In addition to being branded as one of the many "firsts" in regards to the long-cherished bridge, the accident brought with it a baffling challenge: which law enforcement unit will be investigating this?

Turns out, there are as many as 11 units in charge of the 6.15-km bridge.

Starting from the structure's concrete, the water below it, the

land below the water, the roads and highways on either side and the rail line running across, to the activities surrounding the mega-structure – Padma Bridge has been carved up like a fish into several jurisdictions.

After Sunday's accident, The Daily Star called the newly-opened Padma Bridge (North) Police Station. When the station was unreachable, the reporter contacted Munshiganj police.

Sumon Deb, additional superintendent of police in Munshiganj, told this newspaper that the accident happened between the 26th and 27th pillars, and therefore,

it does not fall within their jurisdiction. It is supposed to be overseen by Padma Bridge (South) Police Station. Deb helpfully recommended that it be contacted instead.

The newly opened Padma Bridge (South) Police Station falls under Shariatpur district. So, when that station too was unreachable, just like its northern counterpart, our reporter called Shariatpur police.

SM Mizanur Rahman, additional superintendent of police of Shariatpur's Naria circle, said the site of the

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Been a bit too late for that!

BAPEX calls jobseekers for written test after 8 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (Bapex) has called job seekers for a written test for the assistant manager post nearly eight years after they applied.

“Thanks for applying for the above posts in 2014/15. You have been selected for the written test after primary evaluation,” reads the letter, signed by Md Abul Bashor, general manager (admin) of Bapex, sent to jobseekers on June 1.

The letter asks them to submit personal details, photos and a copy of the “calling letter” to the Bapex building in Dhaka's Karwan Bazar by July 14. “Otherwise, it will not be possible to send you an admit card for the written test,” it says.

Motaleb Hossain, who is now a senior officer at a state-run bank, is one of the recipients of the letter. “I completely forgot that I had applied for the post. I was dumbfounded when a resident student of Dhaka University – who stays at the same hall as mine – informed me about the letter,” said Motaleb, a former DU student.

Many of the applicants are currently working at different government and private organisations for years now, said several of them.

“It is a demonstration of sheer negligence of the Bapex authorities. My age limit for the job expired in 2016. How can I still sit for the exam?” wondered another applicant.

“I can only recall that I applied twice for the post in 2014 and 2015. I thought the exams had taken place and I somehow didn't get the admit cards,” said Abdur Rahman, who applied for the job.

He came to know about Bapex's call for a written test after seeing the photo of the “calling letter” posted by his friend on social media.

Contacted, Bapex General Manager Abul Bashor said the delay may have happened due to “administrative complications”. “We called for the written test as the complication has been resolved,” he said.

Asked about the concerns of the applicants, Bashor said he has nothing to do with the matter.

Many of the applicants are currently working at different government and private organisations for years now.

Early marriage key obstacle

Say speakers on achieving SDG 5

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-one percent of women aged 20 to 24 have been married before their 18th birthday, and child marriage is still a significant obstacle to achieving SDG 5, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They stressed the need for creating space for girls to meaningfully participate in dialogues and ensuring a conducive environment for girls within the family to decide their life goals.

They made the comments at the discussion on CARE's study findings at The Daily Star Centre. CARE Bangladesh in association with The Daily Star organised the event.

The study focused on strategies and needs to prevent child, early, and forced marriage. It also identified the challenges to implementing existing policies, procedures, and strategies.

Mahmudur Rahman Khan, technical coordinator, research, monitoring and education of CARE Bangladesh, who disclosed the findings, said 3.8 million



(aged 20 to 24) girls were married off before their 18th birthday; 18 percent of them were married off before age 15.

This significantly impacts economic growth, with an estimated loss of 1.7 percent of GDP, said Mahmudur, quoting Berkeley Economic Review, 2018.

The pandemic has put up to 10 million girls at risk of becoming child brides in the next decade, according to Unicef, he said.

Questioning existing rules, Ruma Sultana, programme coordinator of Manusher Jonno

Foundation (MJF), said the age of early marriage for any particular reason is not clear in the rules; 78 percent of such marriages were done following the parents' decision.

Reefat Bin Sattar, director of programme development and quality at Save the Children, said it is essential to raise voice and create space for children.

Sigma Ainul, programme manager and senior programme officer of Population Council, stressed the need to invest more on girls and raise their status in society.

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MAHMUDUR RAHMAN KHAN
Technical Coordinator, CARE Bangladesh

